

4460.d.

SERMONS

ON

PRACTICAL SUBJECTS,

PREACHED IN DUBLIN.

By GILBERT AUSTIN, A.M. M.R.I.A.

LATE CHAPLAIN OF THE MAGDALEN ASYLUM,
DUBLIN.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-
YARD; AND J. ARCHER, NO. 80, DAME STREET,
DUBLIN.

1795.

TO
EARL FITZWILLIAM

THE following discourses are most humbly inscribed; in gratitude for his countenance and protection, and in testimony of the high and unfeigned respect entertained for his many virtues, for his zeal in support of true piety, and for his munificent charity, both public and private, during his administration in Ireland; by his lordship's

most faithful

and most obliged

humble servant,

GILBERT AUSTIN.

4 X
1

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF KING CHARLES THE FIRST

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON

IN TWO VOLUMES

LONDON: Printed by A. MILLAR, in Pall-mall.

1741.

Vol. I.

CHAP. I.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

THE KING'S MARRIAGE.

CONTENTS.

SERMON I.

Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil. Exod.
xxiii, 2. page 1.

SERMON II.

Preached at the chapel of the Magdalen Asylum, May
12, 1793, for the poor manufacturers of Dublin.
*And the Lord spake unto Moses saying, I have heard
the murmurings of the children of Israel—speak
unto them saying, at even ye shall eat flesh, and in
the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye
shall know that I am the Lord your God.* Exod.
xvi, 11, 12. p. 17.

SERMON III.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, May 5, 1793.
Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.
Matt. xii, 12. p. 39.

SERMON IV.

Quench not the spirit. I Thes. v, 19. . . . p. 63.

SERMON V.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, Dec. 22, 1793.
*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall
not pass away.* Mark xiii, 31. p. 79.

SER-

SERMON VI.

Who hath brought life and immortality to light. II Tim.

i, 10. p. 101.

SERMON VII.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, Feb. 9. 1794.

*Then your eyes shall be opened: and ye shall be as gods,
knowing good and evil. Gen. iii, 5. . . . p. 137.*

SERMON VIII.

*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the
excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

Philip. iii, 8. p. 167.

SERMON IX.

For the Charity-school at Monkstown, Aug. 10, 1794.

*Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his
Lord hath made ruler over his household, to give
them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant,
whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*

Mat. xxiv, 45, 46. p. 187.

SERMON X.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, March 20, 1795.

*Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help
me. But he answered, and said, it is not meet to
take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs.*

Mat. xv, 25, 26. p. 215

SERMON XI.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, April 3, 1791.

And Jesus said unto the woman, neither do I condemn thee, go, and sin no more. John viii, 2. . . . p. 235.

SERMON XII.

On the death of lady Arbella Denny.

And I heard a voice from Heaven saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. Rev. xiv, 13. p. 275.

er

SERMON XIII.

Preached at the Magdalen, Dublin, April 6, 1794.

And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. Luke xviii, 13. p. 297.

SERMON XIV.

Preached at St. Anne's, Dublin, on the Fast day, 1795.

And Abraham drew near and said, wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city; wilt thou also destroy, and not spare the place, for the fifty righteous that are therein? Gen. xviii, 23, 24. p. 339.

SER-

SERMON XV.

Preached at St. Anne's, Dublin, March 8, 1795, for
the benefit of the Meath Hospital.

*Which now, of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? Luke
x, 36. p. 363.*

SERMON XVI.

Preached at St. Nicholas Without, March 22, 1795,
for Mr. Kirwan.

*Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands
of wickedness? Is it not to deal thy bread to the
hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast
out, to thy house; when thou seest the naked that
thou cover him? If. lviii, 6, 7. p. 393.*

SERMON XVII.

Preached at St. Mary's, Dublin, April 19, 1795, for
the Dispensary of St. Mary's, and St. Thomas and
St. George.

*Behold thou hast made my days as it were a span long,
and mine age is even nothing in respect of thee, and
verily every man living is altogether vanity. Pf.
xxxix, 6. p. 423.*

SERMON XVIII.

Preached at the beginning of the year.

*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our
hearts unto wisdom. Pf. xc, 12. p. 445.*

SERMON I.

EXODUS, XXIII. 2.

**"THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MULTITUDE TO
"DO EVIL."**

SINCE to be obedient to the laws of God is the truest wisdom of men, he has graciously awakened their attention by very explicit declarations; so that they cannot be at any loss to understand their duty, unless they wish to deceive themselves. The source of every danger is pointed out; the passions and the carnal lusts of the flesh are required to be brought into subjection; and the very heart, the most insidious origin of sin, is commanded to be purified from all evil thoughts, lest they should tempt to their correspondent evil actions. But it would be altogether in vain, towards securing obedience, that the laws of God are awful, clear, and intelligible; and in vain, should even the heart itself be kept pure; were they supposed, like human laws, to be regulated by precedent; and were men at liberty to conduct themselves with regard to them as they see others do: for the laws of God not being attended with

B

their

their complete sanction of rewards or punishments in this life, too many are found who violate them daily, availing themselves in their folly of the long suffering of God. And when the passions are awake, and excite men to indulge them contrary to their duty, they are apt to turn their eyes upon the successful impunity of greater sinners, and draw from them a precedent for their own indulgence. But to act according to such precedents, or to shelter our own sinfulness under the deep shadow of the sins of other men, is altogether useless and unlawful; for the prohibition is express in the words of the text, as well as in various other parts of Scripture---*Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil: (Ex. xxiii. 2.) My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: (Prov. i. 10.) A companion of fools shall be destroyed: (Prov. xiii. 20.) Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners: (I. Cor. xv. 23.) Beware of evil workers: (Philip. iii. 2.) Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord: (II. Cor. vi. 17.) Neither be partaker of other mens sins: (I. Tim. v. 22.)* Nor are we alone in various passages of Scripture forbidden to follow evil examples, but it is enjoined to christians, that they should follow good examples, and give them also to others.---*Be ye followers of me (says St. Paul), even as I also am of Christ: (I. Cor. xi. 1.) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify*

glorify your Father which is in Heaven: (Matt. v. 16.) Provoke each other to love and good works: (Heb. x. 24.)

If we wish, therefore, to discharge effectually the high duties of our calling, we must not only be careful to avoid evil examples, but we must even proceed farther, and scrupulously direct our actions so, that they shall become the shining light of a good example to others. This is, indeed, the perfection of christian conduct; but as the avoiding of evil precedes the active discharge of our duty, and leads to it most effectually, I shall chiefly confine my attention to this part of our subject.

God has so formed the human mind, and endowed us with the grand faculty of reason, that, at a very early period of life, we perceive very distinctly the beauty of virtue, and the excellence of truth, if at any time fairly presented to our understanding. Reason already flourishes when the passions hardly can be discovered; and this noble faculty, under the will and providence of God, arrives at some degree of firmness and strength before the rank vegetation of the passions springs up to choke it. And, perhaps, in general, the contest between reason and them would terminate more happily, and reason would in general be victorious over the passions, were it not for the powerful influence of bad example.

The principal incentive and reward for human actions is approbation. The most excellent species of which is that approbation, which arises in a man's own breast upon the consciousness of doing well: but no such approbation can possibly arise in the breast, when the principles of reason, of virtue, or religion are violated. On the contrary, if we look within on such occasions, it is not possible to escape self-condemnation, which shall be painful in proportion to the degree of our conscious guilt. Such a state of mind is highly favourable to every virtue, and more than sufficient to check any dangerous growth of the passions. But, unfortunately, so prone are men to sin, that the uneasiness of frequent self-condemnation makes us look as little as possible within, and turns our attention to a less rigid tribunal. If we cannot approve in our own heart the evil we have done, or which we wish to do, we have but to look abroad at once for precedent and approbation. It is true, the laws of God, and perhaps of men, as well as our own hearts, condemn us; but the customs of men, and their sentiments, are favourable and indulgent. To their false approbation, therefore, we fly; and adopt it instead of the approbation of truth and conscience: and their evil examples we substitute in the place of the suggestions of pure reason, and of the commandments of God. And it appears almost a demon-

demonstration, that if sin obtained no greater encouragement abroad than it does at home in the heart; and if the disapprobation of all men followed sin and vice as surely as the disapprobation of conscience when pure and enlightened; the power of reason and religion would be fully sufficient to prevent the most dangerous excesses, and bring among us speedily what we daily pray for, the Kingdom of Heaven.

But the state of things is far removed from this blessed situation: men associate not to discourage but to countenance and approve of sin in every form. And when a man has outraged his own conscience, by any degree of enormity, so much that he dares not to look within, he has only to join himself with those who are in the same manner guilty, and to call upon them to judge concerning the state of his conscience; and instead of condemnation, he will obtain applause from the perverted tribunal.

Is there any folly among men, however dangerous or ruinous, which does not meet with the countenance of a thousand societies? Is there any crime which, in the face of every human and divine law, finds not its abettors and approvers?

When passion urges, and when reason and religion would restrain, the feeble restraints of reason and religion are soon broken through by passion, and she shelters her votary under the au-

thority and protection of these auxiliaries. If approbation be an incentive to the actions of a man, what need he look for the silent approbation of a good conscience, when he may exchange it for the clamorous applause of the tongues of favouring multitudes?

Whilst the bountiful providence of God has liberally bestowed his good things on man, *corn and oil to make him of a cheerful countenance, and wine to make his heart glad*, both reason and religion-enjoin such a temperate use of those gifts of God as may best agree with the will of God, and secure them to become effectually the blessings intended. But the folly of men perverts their benevolent purpose, and changes them into a curse. Intemperance, abusing God's blessings, provides for its own punishment, and plants in the constitution the seeds of those painful disorders, which render human life a miserable burthen, and which contract its narrow span even within narrower limits. Chronic pains invade the sources of the life, and health, and enjoyment of the intemperate glutton. *Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to drink strong drink. Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? they that tarry long at the wine, they that go to see mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth its colour to the cup, when it moveth itself aright; at the last it biteth like a serpent*

serpent and stingeth like an adder: thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things: yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or he that lieth on the top of a mast: (Prov. xxiii. 29.) And to this and other just representations of the wise king, of the evil effects of immoderate use of wine, our Lord and his Apostles strictly command us to *be temperate in all things: (I. Cor. ix. 25.) Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess: (Eph. v. 18.)* But although the laws of God enjoin men to observe a strict temperance, and although their own experience frequently proves the wisdom and goodness of this injunction, evil example, more powerful, tempts them to frequent excess. Sensual appetites find their most powerful ally in evil example: nay, even when the sensual appetites are sated, and recoil with disgust from the bowl of intemperance, evil example alone can force a man into excess, contrary to his reason, contrary to the laws of God, and in spite of strong disgust itself. Thus, it is in vain declared in Scripture, that thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; the influence of the multitude is more powerful than every other influence; and the multitude tempt you to evil, and will bestow upon your compliance that approbation, which you cannot find in your own breast, or hope for from God.

The object of the multitude, in all its descriptions, seems strongly bent to evil. Whole multi-

tudes of men are convened, and meet together, for the express purpose of indulgence in all intemperance : associated meetings are formed, and cemented together by the mutual countenance they give to and require for each others intemperance. Even in private society it seems a glory to promote or to indulge in excess ; and to be temperate, or to encourage temperance, seems alone to subject to shame, and to be in danger of disgrace among men. We might hope, perhaps, that such flagrant violation of the laws of God, of reason, and of experience, could be found only among the young and thoughtless ; and that the graver and more steady character of manhood would, along with years and experience, bring wisdom and temperance---but we should hope in vain : manhood in general (with happily a few exceptions), after a youth of excess, adopts an established and fixed intemperance ; and from the decline of the day till the late hours of night, you will often find the very father of a family perverting his children, and tempting his friends, by the weight of his example and authority, to violate every rule of decorum and temperance---wasting his own precious time ; abridging his short term of life ; soliciting about him all the well-earned tortures of chronic visitations ; overturning the principles of youth, and entailing upon them hereditary indolence, hereditary excesses, and hereditary disorders.

But

But thou shalt not follow the multitude to do evil. If your friends, your brethren, your fathers, entice you to sin, flee ye from them.

We have here spoken of intemperance, but intemperance is not alone guilty of joining to itself the multitude. The multitude in evil are found approving, abetting, protecting every other sin, and every other vice, and every other crime.

When God, with goodness guarding the heart against the very thought of evil, with great solemnity declares---*thou shalt not covet*; wilt thou, in direct violation of his commandment, go on in thy wickedness, and labour to circumvent thy neighbour in all thy dealings? You will not rob him of his ox or his ass, because the law of the land protects his property, and threatens you, if you violate it, with immediate and disgraceful punishment; but you will deceive him, and over-reach him in your dealings for his ox or ass, because human laws cannot reach to punish fraud in all its windings; and because, moreover, you have yourself been cheated and deceived, you hold it lawful in like manner to cheat and to deceive; following the evil maxims, and obtaining the approbation of the multitude, but forgetting the commandments of God.

God commands you not to covet; but the multitude is directed by other laws; your covetousness will meet indulgence from theirs.---Go then to meetings, to which you are invited night
by

by night, to plunder, and to be plundered; to cheat, and to be cheated. Go and devote your precious time to the calculation of those chances, which shall gratify your avarice and covetousness, and shall introduce your greedy hand into your neighbour's purse. The multitude will caress you, and will approve of the obliging and attentive avarice, which nightly sucks their vitals. If your passion burn higher, and you seek the higher praise of men for more exalted covetousness, forsake the petty meetings of the private table, and enroll yourself among the multitudes, that associate for deep games, and for mighty hazards; that swallow up every principle in their own great concerns.—Go, and stake your fortune for another fortune; go, and stake your honour; go, and stake your life against another man's life; go, and stake your immortal soul against the most unequal hazard.—Even after all, the multitude, that associate with you in this evil, will approve the evil.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, (Ex. xx.) says the commandment of God. *Abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul,* (1 Pet. ii. 11), says the apostle. If you would rather hear the multitude, and follow them, you will obtain their approbation and countenance, even after your crimes and your perfidy shall have peopled these walls with broken-hearted penitents; even after you have violated the laws of hospitality, along with the laws of God: when
you

you have torn from the fond husband the beloved wife of his bosom; and, when you have robbed him, along with her, of his honour, and all his earthly happiness. The multitude, (that is, a certain description of them), cherish a crime like this, under the name of fashionable gallantry, which encourages the seduction of the matron, with a depravity beyond example.

I pass over various and strong illustrations of the dangerous consequences of following the multitude in their evil examples, and turn to this observation, That the mischief of evil example is most effectually counteracted by good example; and, that good example must begin among individuals.

From individual virtue, from the fear of God still kept alive in the hearts of a few sincere christians, is every gross corruption of manners to be stopped in its progress. Vice, under the countenance of the multitude, is a daring and triumphant bravo; but steady virtue, and firm principle, alarm and arrest the coward. Sin requires the support of outward auxiliaries—Innocence stands secure, even when alone; but, having on the armour of righteousness, and the shield of faith, which is the Gospel of Christ, it is invincible.—A few virtuous and religious characters are sufficient, if they determine to operate a reformation of manners. It is wisely commanded, therefore, that we should not follow a multitude to do evil;
for

for we not only lose ourselves along with the possessed herd, but we lose the glorious opportunity of benefiting thousands by our good example.

The great obstacle against our obedience to the laws of God is the fear of men: but our Lord warns us, that we fear not them who destroy the body, and have no farther power; but that we fear Him who is able to destroy both the soul and body, in Hell. But it is not, indeed, the *fear* of those who kill the body, that causes the greatest mischief; for men blush to be thought to fear any shape of death. That fear of men, which is most destructive to every good principle in the best of minds, is the apprehension of ridicule; not of ridicule pointed against shameful errors, but of the ridicule of fools, which assaults that virtue, which would stand against the corruption of the evil multitude. By this absurd fear is the inexperienced and generous mind terrified into the course it abhors, to gratify and obtain the applauses of the base multitude which it despises. A youth of this character is afraid only of the opinions of the worthless and the unwise. He courts only their applause, and sacrifices, to their absurd approbation, the approbation of good men, of a good conscience, and of his God. And thus he acts, even whilst the precepts of wisdom and religion, that he has derived from the most venerable authority, live in his memory, and ring in his ears; which have
taught

taught him, that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom ; and, that true courage, afraid of God alone, only fears to violate his laws. But, *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.* (Prov. i. 10.) Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.

I am far from having yet enumerated even a small part of those various errors, to which the evil multitude seduce those who have not courage to resist ; for, alas ! what sin or crime may not be found to originate from such feebleness. But, if I have touched upon, or recalled to your minds any error, to which you have been betrayed by an improper compliance with the vices of others, vindicate hereafter your own liberty in Christ, and be no longer the servants of sin. And, if you have not yet made the experiment, when evil example, or evil advice, would have tempted you into error ; on the first occasion that occurs try one firm resolution, and, I trust, you will obtain the congratulation of your own heart, which is far beyond the false applauses of the vicious multitude. And, if you have hitherto yielded to the evil adviser, on the next occasion, for once, reprove him with serious firmness, and you will find how mean, how weak, how timid his counsels are. You will find how the light of truth and virtue, nay, if you are yet innocent, you will find how the feebleness of innocence itself can discover and expose the base deformity of sin.

In

In order to obtain this superiority over evil example, and evil advice, however innocence alone and a pure heart may suffice, in many instances, yet we should not, in an evil world, trust ourselves alone to them. God has graciously been pleased to provide us with an express declaration of his will, and has given his laws, and his holy Gospel, to guide and restore us, lest, on the one hand, innocence, degenerating into ignorance, might be betrayed into offences; and lest those, who have strayed, should not know how to regain the right path. It is therefore the indispensable duty of Christians to inform themselves of God's will and commandments, and to walk according to them, in fear and humility. To the pure morality of the Gospel should all our conduct be referred, and thence should we, by just reasoning, draw principles for the regulation of all our conduct in life. And, having fixed on first principles, to those we should adhere with all possible firmness; but, should we, since such is the condition of human frailty, at any time swerve from our duty, we should be careful to make our errors as short, and our return as speedy as possible.

We are to take good care that no scoffs or derision should laugh us from what is right, for derision is the great argument for following the multitude in evil. The imputation of singularity (if to obey God's laws were a singularity), should be our glory, and not our shame. But happily
mankind,

mankind, however corrupt, are not yet so degraded; for, even in the very midst of folly and vice, true virtue still ensures respect. And, however men may love the darkness, rather than the light, because their deeds are evil, the virtuous, scattered over the earth, like the stars in the heavens, give beauty, and some degree of lustre, even to night itself. And their glory rests not here; but, if we hear the Gospel of Christ, we shall be persuaded, that the influence of their good examples shall obtain them a high degree thereof, in their eternal and unchangeable estate. *For they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament: and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.* (Dan. xii. 3.)

SERMON II.

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL OF THE MAGDALEN ASYLUM,
MAY 12, 1793,

FOR THE POOR MANUFACTURERS,

OF THE
CITY OF DUBLIN.

THE general and sudden decay of public credit, at this period, interrupted the Works carried on to a great extent in the City and Liberties of Dublin; in consequence of which, multitudes of poor Manufacturers were left destitute of the means of subsistence. Under this calamity it appeared to the preacher, to be his duty to recommend those poor people to the attention of the wealthy congregation, which usually frequents the Magdalen Chapel: and the more particularly, as the late excellent Lady Arbella Denny, who had been the foundress of the Magdalen in Dublin, had formerly with success, on something of a similar calamity, influenced people of fashion to adopt a plan for their relief. The Preacher, in this Discourse, recommended her example, and happily with some degree of effect.

SERMON II.

EXODUS XVI. 11, 12.

“ AND THE LORD SPAKE UNTO MOSES SAYING,
“ I HAVE HEARD THE MURMURINGS OF THE
“ CHILDREN OF ISRAEL—SPEAK UNTO THEM
“ SAYING, AT EVEN YE SHALL EAT FLESH,
“ AND IN THE MORNING YE SHALL BE
“ FILLED WITH BREAD, AND YE SHALL
“ KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD.”

WHEN the Lord, by his servant Moses, had delivered the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, he led them through the depths of the sea, and sustained them with bread from Heaven, in the barren wilderness, for forty years. If the wonders he had wrought for their deliverance from Egypt had not been sufficient, to impress this people with just veneration for his holy name, and to engage them to commit themselves implicitly to the direction of his good Providence, their journey, attended by miraculous events, which must have been known to every individual, and their dwelling in the wilderness, under such extraordinary proofs of Divine interposition for so long

a period, were sufficient to fill their hearts with love and gratitude to the Lord their God, even to the latest period of their existence. When this people had escaped their enemies, by passing in safety an arm of the sea, which swallowed up Pharaoh and all his host, their acknowledgement of the goodness of God must be supposed to have been lively and sincere. And they should have trusted in him always. But such is the short duration of human confidence in their Maker, even after every experience of his goodness, that the first account we read of the conduct of the Israelites, after this miraculous protection of God, was a distrust in his providence, and murmurs against his servants Moses and Aaron. And yet we are neither surprized nor indignant at this conduct. They had, indeed, escaped their enemies; but they thought themselves (though they should have remembered their God) likely to be abandoned to all the horrors of famine in the Wilderness, in which was neither food nor water to be found. *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the Wilderness. And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord, in the land of Egypt. When we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this Wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.* The gracious answer of the Lord God to the desponding people, follows:

Then

Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold I will rain bread from heaven for you: and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law or no. (Ex. xvi. 2, 3, 4.) I have heard the murmurings of the children of Israel. Speak unto them saying, At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God. (Ex. xvi. 11, 12.)

Since this distant period, when God displayed his mercies to the people of Israel, even unto this very hour, throughout the whole family of mankind, his general dispensations have had the same object. He sends trials and difficulties upon his servants, at once to prove their faith and confidence in him, and to manifest his glory in affording relief to their sufferings. It may happen, that his judgments fall sometimes in tremendous punishment. But his chastisements are more frequently to correct, and to recall to a sense of duty like a tender father; and when that is effected, he displays the riches of his goodness and mercy. In this manner, we most humbly trust, he hath visited us. His visitation is yet but partial, and not in its most dreadful form. Neither *war* nor *famine* yet stalk through our devoted land. Praised be his holy name, who has hitherto preserved us from their worst effects! But though at a distance from us, their pestilential breath has gone forth, and has unnerved and sunk the public credit; and

their deadly blight has touched the labouring man's bread. The hopes of his harvest have fallen into blackened chaff before the lips of his hungry family.

What have been the effects of these partial visitations, and, if God avert them not in his mercy, of these beginnings of sorrows? Are we ignorant of their effects? Or, if not ignorant, are we careless? No, I will not suppose any so unfeeling as to disregard the calamities, that threaten or begin to fall upon his country. When dangerous symptoms alarm us for the public health and safety, we must not be so stupid as to think of going on in our ways, engaged in pleasures, and engaged in vices till the evil is past remedy, and compels us to experience the most fatal events. We must not act with the ignorant exertions of the vulgar, who, when all the symptoms of increasing fever have already seized them; when the head is confused, the heart faint; when chilling cold runs along the nerves, and when the bones ache; still endeavour to follow their ordinary labours, rejecting medical assistance, refusing confinement, and combating with the enemy already revelling in their blood, till the burning fever at last strikes them down to abide the utmost exertions of his fury. We will act more wisely. It becomes our better knowledge, when even the most distant indispositions alarm this our precious health, to apply suitable remedies, and keep off, if possible, the dreadful

ful crisis of actual contest with the powerful enemy.

The Almighty Lord dealeth with us, perhaps, as he dealt with the Egyptians. He sends us warning previous to punishment. When he threatened that obstinate people with his tremendous plagues, he instructed those, whose hearts were not quite hardened, how to escape. *Send therefore now, and gather thy cattle, and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast, which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die. He that feared the word of the Lord amongst the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and cattle flee into the houses. And he that regarded not the word of the Lord, left his servants and cattle in the field.* (Ex. ix. 19, 20, 21.) You know the event. It is the part therefore of wisdom and piety, to be swift to hear the word of the Lord, and earnest to understand and to obey whatever may seem like a warning from him.

We cannot plead ignorance of his will, or be blind to the warning of his visitations. We know, *That righteousness exalteth a nation, and that sin is a reproach to any people.* (Prov. xiv. 34.) Nay, that it hath been our reproach. Infidelity and corruption of manners have spread of late their contagion wider, than at any former period. Venality, and avarice, and luxury prevail beyond what was known in better days. We are therefore

obnoxious to the just judgments of God. And O, Almighty Father, how various are the instruments of thy vengeance! *O turn thy people to thee, and spare them! Lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole.* The blood of these nations has not yet indeed been spilled profusely, to atone for their sins. In this, as in all things, God is just and good, for our nations are not sanguinary. But our treasures are lavished and lost, for we are in love with the Mammon of this world. Avaricious commerce has greedily swallowed the trash she longs after, and now she disgorges it, and faints with sickness. Avarice is punished; avarice the passion of this age; the passion and the sin of commercial nations. If the love of gold have sent forth the criminal navigator to traffic in human blood, and in human woes; if the love of gold have caused blind avarice to furnish the dagger to the enemies of her country, and to purchase, in a foreign realm, the potter's field, the price of robbery, and the price of blood; how shall it prosper? * It has not prospered. Heaven has punished these islands with exemplary justice. The avarice which hath made us guilty is punished. Its golden speculations are dreams, which end in real and horrid poverty. Touched by the hand of Divine vengeance, down fall the mighty fabricks

* It was reported at this time, that the decay of public credit, in our sister country, was, in part, owing to very deep and disgraceful speculations in the affairs of France.

reared upon these hollow foundations. But, alas! their ruin spreads far and wide, and involves in its destruction thousands of the innocent, of the honest, and industrious.

Can we forbear to call your minds towards such reflections, when the unexampled failure of public credit has nearly ruined the commerce of our flourishing nations? Day after day arrives the dismal tale of bankruptcy; and name after name lengthens the sad catalogue. The conflagration seems to spread from house to house, so that the most solid is unable to resist its fury, appears to expect its fate with mournful anxiety, dreading the moment when public confidence, and public credit shall be reduced to an heap of ashes. To whom therefore shall we look up, except unto thee, O God, who for our sins art justly offended? Can we consider such a panic, as has seized and shakes our public credit, as any thing less than a Divine warning for the sinfulness of our avarice. The losses of our country, by capture or by the sword, have not been greater, nay, they have been fewer, than in many former wars; but the failure of public credit is beyond all example. The remedy is to be sought in the source of the evil. If we have been avaricious, if the love of gain have urged us beyond the views of honest commerce, let us check our impious thirst of gold, and confine that desire within the bounds of sobriety and temperance. Let us make ample restitution of ill-gotten gain; let

us

us free the captive, and relieve the indigent; let us apply to ourselves the indignant expostulation of God to the Jews, when they, like us, had called upon him in fasting and prayer, and implored him to avert their calamities. (Is. lviii. & lix. 1, 2.) Permit me to recite to you the passage: *Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day unto the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen?—To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house; when thou seest the naked that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thy own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the Morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the Glory of the Lord shall be thy re-reward. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to prosper, for the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Behold the Lord's Hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God,*

God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear.

Let us hasten then to repent and amend our lives, and relieve the oppressed, that he may turn upon us the light of his countenance.

The hand of the Lord, we believe and trust, is not shortened that it cannot save; and we look with confidence, under his blessing, to the wisdom of those measures, which are now devising by our Government to restore the public credit.

But shall we be content to throw indolently the whole burthen upon those, who toil in the arduous labours of government? Shall we not give our aid individually and unanimously? Shall we not extend our immediate relief to those who are ready to perish, and who must perish ere the slow operation of the best, and most effectual plans of government can have their effect.

The report of the humane committee, which has enquired into the present state of the distressed Manufacturers, has publicly set forth, that in one branch of business from 5 to 6000, and in another 16,000, are now out of employ, and destitute of the means of subsistence. Not to calculate the numbers to be added to this melancholy catalogue from others of their statements, you see thus 22,000 of your most industrious poor have this week past, nay, a much longer time, experienced all the horrors of famine. The shock of public credit may have been felt by the great, as well as by the humble.

ble. But from you it has stripped only a few of your ornaments; it has as yet hardly checked your pleasures, hardly reached your very superfluities, so plentifully hath God in his bounty lavished his good things upon you. But from the labouring poor, the alarm of public credit has snatched his daily bread. It has wrested from ingenuity, the instruments of his art; from labour, the implements of his toil; and from both, the means of life. It has cast them into the desert wilderness, in the midst even of this wealthy and luxurious city, wherein they must die of famine; if the God of Heaven, whose benign influence can make the barren elements pour down abundance on his children, work not a miracle for them, and rain down bread for them, as he did for the Children of Israel; or, rather, according to his usual employment of secondary agents for his good purposes, unless he operate by his divine grace upon the hearts of the wealthy and the benevolent, to bestow upon them the necessary relief.

Hasten, Oh! hasten to feed the industrious poor with liberal hand, and bring down upon your heads their blessing. No guilty speculations of theirs have shaken the public credit; no complicated plans of avarice and crimes have been devised by them, to swell their coffers with the price of blood; peaceful and sedentary, and fast engaged in simple arts, they earn, at best, a scanty, but contented livelihood, whilst the objects of their
various

various toils find a ready consumption. But even were any degree of guilt to be charged on the laborious mechanic himself, pity his famished little ones, and feed them before they die. They cry in your streets, and extend their innocent hands for a morsel of your bread, of the crumbs which fall from your lordly tables. Refuse them not, lest again their distracted fathers fall forth, and instead of satisfying their hunger, I might almost say innocently, as the other day, the sharpness of their necessities should drive them to desperation, and make them stir up the image of frightful war within the peaceful walls of their native city *. Many a time have you invited, and often you have feasted the great and the wealthy. How happy have you been when the utmost stretch of your most studied luxuries, and the last refinements of culinary arts have pleased the fastidious delicacy of such guests. Has it not come to pass sometimes, that even the bounds of your ample fortunes have been transgressed to gratify the exquisite and curious palate of high fed luxury? Yes, the bounds of your ample fortunes have for this purpose been frequently transgressed; yes, they have been willingly transgressed and wantonly. What have been your rewards? The praise of parasites; the fame of splendid folly; the private reproaches of extravagance; and the sneers of those very guests

* The people, within this week, had plundered a few shops of provision.

your

your ambition studied to please with all the costliness of sumptuous entertainment. A little farther on in life, embarrassment in circumstances, and chronic pains, have been the well earned rewards of intemperance. The parable of Dives and Lazarus makes a dreadful conclusion of a sensual life, if the heart be shut up against the wants of fellow creatures.

But let us reverse this shocking picture ; send forth your invitations to other guests, invite the inhabitants of the streets and lanes, throw wide your gates to feed the hungry ; you need not prepare for them your studied courses ; they want no foreign cookery, no costly rarities. Fear not the disappointment of fastidious guests, fear not their scorn : your houses will be filled, and they will bless you ; and your hearts shall find a joy in having satisfied the hungry soul, beyond all you ever experienced in gorging the bloated sons of luxury. Fear no embarrassment from such entertainments, *Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.* (Ecc. xi. 1.) God's blessing will be upon the works of your hands, and you will prosper. From these entertainments follow no crude indigestions, no chronic pains, no embittering of days by loss of health ; and when the last day shall arrive, your Master and Saviour will thus address you : *I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : Come,*

ye

ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (Matt. xxv.)

It was my purpose, to have laid before you, this day, a subject for your consideration, which is near to my heart *. But the more pressing and nearer interests of humanity, and my instant duty of calling on you to relieve your fellow citizens, have turned my attention, for the present, to their necessities.

If the departed saint, whose memory will ever be fresh and sweet within these walls, which her piety has raised to protect and shelter the unfortunate; if she, from the society of the blessed, and from the presence of her Redeemer, could look down upon us with human sentiments and human passions only; even so she would approve the preference we give to the cause of misery, and she would rejoice, that the tribute of our veneration and love to her should be deferred to a more convenient season. We thought to have moved you to erect to her memory a simple tablet, as the monument of her many virtues, and to fix it as a lasting ornament on those walls, of which she laid the foundation, and of which she completed the Christian plan. But more pressing interests call for your liberality, and this subject will bear to be deferred; for whilst one stone remains upon another of this

* To speak of erecting a tablet to the memory of the late excellent lady Arbella Denny, in the chapel of the Magdalen Asylum.

temple of God, whilst one stone remains upon another of this house of repentance and prayer, her memory shall live, and shall be read, deeply engraven on every stone to its very foundation.

Her memory shall obtain a nobler monument than marble or brass: it shall last, it shall flourish and be cherished, so long as gratitude shall adorn the human breast; so long as the prey of the vile seducer, innocence, and youth, and unprotected beauty, shall be entangled in his toils, and plunged into the horrors of sin, and thence emerging by miraculous providence, shall be taught her name who first opened, to save them from utter destruction, this house of refuge, of mercy, and of hope in their God. Yes, you will remember her whilst memory holds its seat; and not you alone, ye Daughters of Affliction, whom she has rescued from the most dire of human misery in body and in soul, but generations of infants will learn and bless the name of their benefactress. And when in the revolution and tide of human affairs, a people suffers as now; when in the midst of plenty, the industrious famish in your streets, as at this moment*; the annals of her Christian labours will be evolved, the precedents of her goodness will be laid before the tri-

* The magistrates and principal merchants, who undertook to relieve the poor manufacturers this year, did actually consult (as I have been informed) the books, in which the late lady Arbella Denny had written her account of her successful exertions in their behalf some years before.

bunals of the magistrates, to draw from them the wisdom of religion; and the ministers of the Gospel, as now, will recal to your recollection the example you should imitate, and present before even the young and thoughtless, the form of lasting beauty, the beauty of holiness. I speak not of imaginary things. This house of refuge is filled, and always has been, with those who once were innocent, and they cannot forget her. Your people are again in want, as they were in her days; and your Magistrates, and your men of dignity, and your men of worth, have not disdained to consult the journals of those days, and to form a plan similar to hers for their relief. She influenced the wealthy and the good, to purchase and to wear the manufactures of their country. They would persuade you to protect your industrious poor in the same manner. We would persuade you again to follow the bright example: we would persuade you to commence the auspicious good work again from this sacred place, the original source of the pious example; from this place the proper source of every pious example; from this place, in which assemble the most distinguished of their sex, in rank, in fortune, and in fashion.

To you then we appeal, with no unfounded hope, for solid relief for the industrious and perishing manufacturers, and their families. We know you have learned well the heavenly faintest virtues of Christian charity and benevolence; we have

seen you often open your hands as wide as your ample fortunes, and as liberally as your feeling hearts. You know how to pity the miserable of every description, and to relieve them. And these humble citizens will, no doubt, experience your bounty---they *have*, no doubt, experienced your bounty; but the perishable gift of a morsel of bread, or the transitory relief you have bestowed, however necessary for the moment, is not all we ask of you, or all you would wish to grant. You would not make the people idle pensioners on your daily bounty. You would wish to give them, if possible, permanent relief, such as arises from stimulating their industry. In this we join issue, we are all agreed. The hands, which now are unnerved and idle, have not lost their art; the looms, which now are forsaken, are not destroyed. Industry has all its implements, and all its materials, and all its ingenuity, prompt, at your command, if you will but employ them.

Shall we not hope then to behold once more all the beauty, and all the virtue, which heaven has so profusely lavished upon our island, clothed in robes more becoming than all the Tyrian purple of old, and than all the inventions of modern elegance. Once more let fashion spring from principle, from genuine patriotism, from true religion; and then her fantastic dominion, her gay caprice, her illusive and ever changing colours, will not only be innocent but laudable, when she scatters industry

over the land, and gives bread to thousands. Her sovereign empire over the female heart shall give a value to the simple manufactures of your country, far beyond the taste of foreign embroidery, and far beyond the wonders of the Indian loom. And every change which art or fancy shall induce you to adopt, in all the varying forms of female dress, will (and slight it not) be accompanied with this sentiment: I have fed the hungry, I have restored the father to his family, a citizen to my country, and the blessings of thousands, who were ready to perish, are now ascending to heaven in my behalf. At that moment the conscious joy of having been the instrument of such various good shall light up your countenance with the glow of benevolence and self-approbation, shall breathe over your whole form the elevated spirit of the happy mind, and shall adorn you with beauty superior to, and independent of personal ornament. We know that fashion can give value to every form, and every material of dress; and your approbation is fashion. Some, perhaps, of those who hear me, know, by their own experience, the truth of what I say. I ask them, when the departed saint, of whom we have spoken, engaged her fair countrywomen to adopt and cherish the sinking manufactures of their native land, did ever beauty appear more lovely, did ever fashion adorn more effectually? I remember, and I could name many of the most elevated, and of the most ami-

able of their sex, who led the van of the patriotic band, and won, wherever they appeared, an universal empire of esteem and love.

But what if even our native manufactures were homely and uncouth, could the virtuous and the benevolent soul of female Sensibility hesitate to use them for the noble purpose we recommend. What though she should wrap herself around with them for awhile, it is but the transformation of a short season, which involves, within the shell of the chrysalis, the gorgeous insect, the emblem of immortality, which shall soon break forth and wing the skies with resplendent glory.

Thither you tend, to that blest abode let us all look up, regulating the conduct of our lives in all respects, as may best prepare us for the awful and blessed change. Proclaim then to the people, the benevolent sentiments with which God hath inspired your hearts, and address them with the words of his holy prophet. *We have heard the murmurings of the Children of Israel. Speak unto them saying, at even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled with bread, and ye shall know that the Lord he is God.*

I have now only to guard your benevolence against a possible mistake. No collection is to be made in this church for the good purposes I have mentioned. I have only considered it *my* indispensable duty in this time of unexampled distress, to endeavour to awaken your hearts to *your* duty.

Not

Not prescribing to your wisdom, and liberal charity, any absolute mode of relieving your suffering people; but only suggesting, only recalling to your minds, plans dictated by similar Christian charity, under nearly similar circumstances, and attended with God's blessing and success. They are well worthy your imitation, as far as they can be adopted. The public prints will more particularly inform you of what is at present expedient, than I could with propriety from this place.

The collection is this day, as usual, to be appropriated to the support of this most pious and Christian institution.

Notwithstanding to your wisdom and liberal charity
and sincere desire of relieving your suffering pe-
ple; but only hesitating, and referring to your
wisdom, and the Christian charity,
under nearly similar circumstances, and attended
with God's blessing and success. They are well
worthy your attention, as they may be adopted.
The report of the well known and experienced
you of what has been experienced, than I could
with any propriety from this place.
The collection for this day, as usual, to be appro-
priated to the support of the most pious and
Christian institutions.

SERMON III.

PREACHED

AT THE

MAGDALEN ASYLUM,

DUBLIN, 5th May, 1793.

THE date of this Sermon, and the peculiar circumstances of the internal state of the Country, in Ireland, will account for many passages not applicable to the immediate situation of affairs. His Grace the Archbishop of Dublin, in obedience to the pious recommendation of his Majesty, orders the Clergy of his diocese, to discourse on the duty of observing the Lord's day, annually, on a particular Sunday.

MEMORANDUM

RECORDED

AT THE

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONER OF THE

The Commission of the
will report the many
no distinction of
1888, the Commission
the day of the
and the

211

SERMON III.

MATT. XII. part of the 12th verse.

“ WHEREFORE IT IS LAWFUL TO DO WELL
“ ON THE SABBATH DAYS.”

THE observation of the sabbath had been enjoined under the law with such rigid severity, that the most necessary business of life was forbidden, under the penalty of death. *Six days may work be done, but the seventh is the sabbath of rest, holy to the Lord: whosoever doeth any work in the sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death. Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations, on the sabbath day.* (Ex. xxxv. 2, 3.) To indulge in useful exercise, or to go, on any account, beyond a certain distance, was esteemed a violation of the sabbath. That distance was called a sabbath day's journey, and is generally reckoned to have been about a mile. And we read in the book of Numbers, that Moses, by the command of God, ordered a man to be stoned for gathering a few sticks on the sabbath day. It is not surprising, that the Jews, instructed to observe this holy day with such strict solemnity, should have been forward enough to listen to the malice of the Pharisees, who charged
our

our Lord's disciples with having violated the sabbath, by plucking a few ears of corn, as they passed through a field. But he refuted the charge fully, even on their own principles, and from the example of David himself, he proved to them, that they were not by any means guilty in thus satisfying their hunger: and then with singular dignity and feeling, he pronounced the mitigation of the severity of the sabbatical law, with respect to his disciples, vindicating to himself his just title to this high exercise of authority. *If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day.* (Mat. xii. 7, 8.) Nor yet satisfied with precept alone on this subject, as usual he added, on this occasion, the weight of his own example to instruct his disciples. The Pharisees presented him, on the sabbath, a man with a withered hand, in order to tempt his power and benevolence to heal his infirmity, that they might accuse him. He hesitated not to leave them all the opening they required; he healed the man, and added the words of our text—*Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.* (Mat. xii. 12.) This is the law of Christ, with respect to the sabbath, and the extent of the christian's charter on that holy day is, that he should exercise himself in doing good.

The severity of the institution was henceforth relaxed to christians, and the sabbath was kept
holy

holy by them, when the duties of religion were properly discharged, 'even though necessary business and relaxation were admitted. But we can have no doubt, that the rigid solemnity, and deep repose, with which it was observed by the Jews, contributed, as well as their other ceremonial worship, to separate this people from the rest of mankind, and to maintain, amidst the corruption and idolatry of the surrounding nations, more awful and impressive notions of the watchful providence of God, and of their dependence upon him. Each seventh year, among the Jews, was observed with sabbatical rest; and the business of agriculture itself, indispensable as it should seem, was intermitted; but God provided for them on the sixth year a double crop. He, who giveth to nations and individuals their daily bread, provided for his people who trusted in him; he, whose blessing upon the labours of the husbandman bestows upon some thirty, upon some sixty, and upon some an hundred fold, by a wonderful reproduction of the seed, which on the faith of his bounty, he commits to the bosom of the earth, provided for his people who trusted in him. This miraculous increase, which we see produce food for all the children of men; this miraculous increase, which we know and see so often, that we cease to wonder at, and perhaps cease to be thankful for it, though without it we must perish; this perpetual miracle, leaves us no difficulty to believe, on the
testi-

testimony of sacred history, that God did, on the sixth year, regularly bestow a double crop upon the toils of the husbandmen of Israel, to provide for the solemn repose of the ensuing sabbatical year, and to teach his people to rely on his providential care. It is also a tradition worthy of credit, from the existence of this people, that during these sacred years of sabbatical rest, on which, as on the sabbath, they were known to push no war with vigour, the hostile nations around did not presume to exercise their savage disposition for blood or plunder, against the people who trusted in the Lord; much less combine with such power as on other occasions they did, in order, if possible, to exterminate them. *Blessed is the people who have the Lord for their God: for except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.* (Ps. cxxvii, 1.)

O beloved brethren, whilst the perilous flames of war are raging, which were kindled in the distant west, and have now spread their rapid conflagration over all Europe, to the east of these happy islands; even now fall down upon your knees, before the throne of the Most High God, who hath fenced us around, with the shield of his providence, and hath protected us from enemies external, and enemies within our cities, within our very thresholds, who might have filled our houses with blood and desolation. *If the Lord himself had not been on our side, now may Israel say;*
if

if the Lord himself had not been on our side when men rose up against us, they had swallowed us up quick, when they were so wrathfully displeased at us. But praised be the Lord, who has not given us over for a prey unto their teeth. (Ps. cxxiv.)

If God have hitherto dealt more graciously with us, than with the nations around us, perhaps for ten righteous men he hath spared our city. Let us studiously endeavour to encrease the number, and how? By purifying our selves, by each individually working out his own salvation. Let us individually pray to God to avert from us the horrors of war; let us live now, as I hope we should act, were the enemy at our gates, not by each trusting to the valour of his neighbour, but, by each supposing the public safety to rest on his own single virtue. The same sentiments, which make a brave and victorious army, form also a virtuous nation, and call around our island the protecting providence of the God of Hosts. And let us not be so rash and unwise, as to trifle, or give ourselves over to the seduction of false pleasures, and neglect of the ordinances of God. The thunder, which rolled its awful and angry murmurs but just now over our heads, has not indeed, God be praised, fallen upon us, with all its desolation, though in some measure we feel its malignant influence: but still the horizon around is overcast, and we know not the moment which may involve us (if
God

God be not entreated) in the ruin we see burst over the heads of devoted nations.

Fire and brimstone from the Lord have fallen upon, and consume, the guilty cities. Sodom and Gomorrah roll up to the angry throne of heaven their dire flames. We hear from remote regions the clank of the scourge of war; we hear the clamour of fury, and blood, and mad rebellion. May God prevent them from reaching us, and keep them at a safe distance. Therefore the piety and wisdom of Government have appointed days of humiliation, in these perilous times; and religious subjects to be enforced, in order to awaken our souls to God, and to engage us to commit our cause to him.

The religious observation of the christian sabbath is a principal and leading requisite to the just sense of God's providence. Therefore we, the ministers of his word, are commanded to make this the topic of our discourses this day.

It may be necessary indeed to remind you, but you cannot be supposed ignorant of your indispensable duties on this day. You have probably, yourselves, experienced how prone mankind are to neglect their duty to God; how insidiously the love of the world twines itself about the heart, and how its tares choke the seed of life. You know, that it may even come to pass, to a man who devotes himself to his worldly pursuits, or to his pleasures, or his vices, that God and his laws may seem

seem banished from the universe, and that the fool may say in his heart, Tush, there is no God.—Nay, we know such impiety *is* the frequent consequence among those who neglect God.—Strange and lamentable depravity!—The sun may shine, the stars revolve, the seasons change, the earth may yield her abundant increase, and teem with her blessings for all living creatures; the whole wondrous œconomy of nature may proceed in admirable order, whilst the worldly and vicious behold not God; whilst they behold him not in all his beautiful and stupendous works, which are above the comprehension and beyond the control of vain man. The ungrateful worldling shall enjoy the wonders of his own existence; the purple tide shall gush through his veins, and he shall live, and he shall exercise the proud and high faculty of his reason, and call himself a man: and yet he may neglect or deny the Lord, his Creator and his God; because he has him not in all his thoughts; because he has removed himself far from his counsels, and despises his ordinances, which would call him to his mind on this holy day.

How justly is it therefore our bounden duty to God, that we should set apart one day at least in seven, to speak and think of his goodness, and to serve him? And how necessary is it to aid our own frailty and ungrateful forgetfulness.—Were the religious duties of the Sabbath, for even a short period, intermitted by a nation; it is highly probable,

bable, the very recollection of God would be obliterated almost universally; and with the loss of religion, every other good would be lost.—Is it necessary to call your attention, in proof of this, to a nation now the most tremendous example of the loss of religious wisdom: I will not say, universally; God forbid; still within its bleeding and distracted bosom, we trust, some righteous men may remain, though they hide their heads, and couch down, to shelter themselves from the storm at this moment raging over them?

Nations, as well as individuals, are influenced in their characters by habit and fashion; and woe to men, collectively or singly, whose fashion or habits induce the slight of religious observances. Religion itself soon is forgotten and rejected, when men affect to despise all external forms, and to confine its exercise to the closet, or to the heart. In all the pursuits of men, of whatever nature, the public countenance is necessary for the greatest prosperity, and most advantageous progress, of those pursuits: therefore public worship is for the interest of religion; and the public discussion of religious subjects instructs at once the hearer and the preacher himself.—*The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?* (Jer. xvii. 9.) says the Prophet. Religion therefore, the most important of man's concerns, should not be trusted alone to a judge so subject to corruption. The passions bribe the heart, tempta-
tions

tions allure and succeed, and then religion is in danger of becoming a system of sensuality, a system of abomination. No; God hath, in his goodness and wisdom, ordained public and solemn worship; and hath separated from the uniform stream of time each seventh day, to be distinguished as holy to himself, and to bring about a perpetually recurring and periodical remembrance of his mercies to the minds of men, who would otherwise forget them ungratefully, and incur the Divine displeasure.

It may not be necessary, nay it is not necessary, for the professors of the liberty of the Gospel to observe the Lord's day like the rigid sabbath of the Jews. But our more liberal religion requires, notwithstanding, that we should observe our Lord's day with religious worship. For the wonders of God's creation do not less nearly interest us, than they did the Jews. The blessing of our redemption through Christ is the peculiar and proper subject of our devout commemorations on this day; and the necessity of calling off our attention from worldly objects, which too closely enchain and bind us down, is as indispensable to the Christian, as it could have been to the Jew; nay, more so, if we may argue from our higher assurance of eternal life, grounded on the resurrection of our Lord from the dead.

Our Lord has benevolently relieved his church from the severity and rigid rest of the Jewish
E
sabbath,

sabbath, and has permitted works of necessity, of piety, and of mercy, to be freely performed on his day, in the words of our text, *It is lawful to do well on the sabbath day.* Nay, even greater indulgence is granted to the professors of the free religion of the Gospel; innocent recreation and social converse may be enjoyed, provided they interfere not with the serious duties of the day. The laborious and the industrious, who are confined to their different worldly occupations during the rest of the week, thus find time for relaxation, as well as for religion; and, provided they keep within the bounds of innocence, even in their Sunday's amusements, they render God an acceptable service.

Indeed, whilst the great object proposed by the rational system of the Christian religion is sufficiently kept in view; that is, the habitual fear of God returning at such short periods, that the cares of the world shall not have time to deface it in the interval; whilst this great object is kept in view, much indulgence may be granted as to the innocent recreations for the rest of the day. And the extent of this indulgence will be regulated better by public opinion, and local customs, than by any rigid bounds or prescription. For, in various countries, various customs have obtained, which suit not the opinions of others; and yet the same good object, the propagation of religious knowledge, and the calling of the mind to God

one

one day in seven, may be almost equally obtained in all. In some countries, after the public devotions of the day are over, and after men have duly served God, so far from supposing public amusements any violation of the sabbath, they consider them as most proper to be held on that day, with unusual splendor, in honour of its chearful festivity. In other countries, the sabbath is observed with an almost Jewish solemnity, and the most innocent recreations are deemed profane. Our country seems to hold a middle course, as to the general opinion on the mode of observing the Lord's day. By our canons, the Sundays are appointed festivals. We are neither so free as the former, as our laws do not allow public spectacles on this day; but we are not so restrained as the latter, since neither do they entirely forbid innocent recreation. It may be conceived, that in any of these countries the Lord's day may be duly and religiously observed, by those who pay a proper attention to the first duties enjoined; which are the indispensable duties of attendance on public worship, and the turning of the heart to God. Other customs are local, and are innocent or otherwise, according to the degree of liberty allowed by the laws of the place: evidently because a violation of any known law or custom is an insult upon the public opinion, and brings scandal in the eyes of the weak and ignorant, who are always the majority, and do not readily distinguish between the

principal and the accessory circumstances of the law. The consequence, with respect to them, may prove either a corruption of manners, or a de-
 restation of the person who gives the scandal. He must be a bad citizen, who would not wish to prevent the one ; and he must be an unfeeling man, who would not wish to avoid the other.

It is not therefore enough, when we have worn off our prejudices by travel in foreign countries, and when we feel certain indulgencies innocent, that we should consider ourselves therefore at liberty to transplant the exotic licence into our colder climate, and less cultivated soil. No good or profitable fruit can be the produce ; but the minds of the weak may easily be diverted from the essentials of religion to the circumstances which are most flattering to human weakness—And the Lord's day, by such innovations, will become a day of idle recreation and profaneness among the people, whilst the grand object of its institution, *religion*, is neglected.

It is dangerous to tamper with feeble minds on the important subject of religion ; they had better be kept in the beaten and established path, which leads securely to life : it is dangerous to trifle with the evil and rebellious heart of man, by any innovations ; it quickly runs after forbidden pleasure, as soon as wholesome restraint is removed. The duty, therefore, of the travelled and enlightened minds, of which, I have no doubt, there are many
 among

among those that hear me, whatever their private sentiments may be of foreign customs, is, on their return to their native country, to respect and conform to all those established, which manifestly tend to the advantage of the morals of the people; even though, with regard to their own opinion, they think they might be dispensed with in the breach.

It may indeed be possible for a people to do well, and even suffer less restraint, and retain less show of religion, if the essential truths be deeply impressed on their heart. But external forms and customs of long standing are the best prop and security for preserving the religion of a people. Religion must be brought near the mind by public worship, and days set apart for the service of God, in order that it may operate with its full effect. At a distance, like other great objects, to every eye it loses its importance and magnitude. Its attraction and value are encreased by its vicinity. Religion is intended to be associated to the human heart by familiar and constant intercourse; so will it be ready at hand, in every emergency, in every difficult conjuncture, and in every trial, to direct, to support, to console, to guard, by God's especial grace. Religion is intended to be a domestic and perpetual ornament to *bind on the hands, and as a frontlet between the eyes, to be written on our doors and the posts of our houses.* It is intended to be the constant rule of just actions, to regulate the af-

fections, and to keep alive the conscience. Religion does not, indeed, consist in forms ; but it is kept alive by forms. In solitude, and in retirement, it may cheer ; but in public worship, it is a burning and a shining fire, that catches from heart to heart, till the flaming sacrifices of a thousand suppliants rise universal, and acceptable to Heaven.

From the various considerations we have laid before you, we conclude, that the general necessity for observing the Lord's day arises from the necessity for keeping alive in the hearts of men a just sense of the goodness of God, and of their dependance upon him, by the periodical and frequent return of a day set apart to his service. And that the due observance of that day, in all Christian countries, whatever may happen to be their local customs in other respects, consists in these two essential points ; that every individual shall duly, on that day, attend public worship, in order to give, and to profit by, good example ; and that every individual shall dedicate some portion of that day to the private devotion of the heart, and thank God for his particular mercies, pray for the continuance of his blessings, and meditate upon his wondrous works. Whatever prevents these great duties, or interferes with them, so as to weaken their proper effect, must be considered as a violation of the commandment, which ordains that the seventh day shall be kept holy. It is therefore well appointed, that the usual and ordinary

ordinary occupations of men shall on this day be interrupted, *That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers, in time to come, saying, what meaneth this, (Jof. iv. 6.) you shall answer them, this day is set apart unto the Lord God.*

Now, whither shall we turn to behold the Christian people, who serve the Lord on this day, even according to the mild and liberal spirit of the Gospel?—Shall we look round within the walls of his holy temples, and bless his name, when we behold his devout and faithful congregations? It is a goodly sight. But can we forbear to reflect also upon the numerous inhabitants of this populous city; of which were even every tenth person to press with zeal on the Seventh day to discharge his duty to the Lord in his holy temples, our contracted walls would burst with the mighty influx of the congregation of God? The fordid narrowness of our churches would no more be the reproach of a city, the other splendid edifices of which vie with the magnificence of ancient and classic Rome. Neither would Mammon be found to have his worship performed zealously and magnificently in temples of marble, in shrines adorned with silk and Tyrian purple, whilst the service of Christians is confined to buildings almost as humble in appearance as that, in which the magi first worshipped their infant and Divine Master. And whilst in this splendid city we find not one church capacious enough, to contain the torrent, which rushes to hear

the voice of eloquence ; we find the very smallest of the rest, vast and wide, and cold as to its capacity for the ordinary devotion, which weekly approaches the house of God.

Long have I remembered this house of repentance and prayer. Some of the pious, who used to frequent it, I recognize ; but some are fallen asleep in the Lord. I recollect how the service of God has been attended here. The cloud which has passed across the face of the Sun has saddened your piety, and kept you immured in your houses. The cold breezes of the North, and the East, have chilled your zeal, and your duty, on the Lord's day. You pray and return thanks only as the season invites : but no season prevents the occupations you prefer to devotion. The temples of folly are equally crowded during the oppressive and sinking heat of the dog-star, and under the damp or freezing influence of the roughest winter. You will say, the places of public resort are warm and safe, but the churches are cold and dangerous : it is precisely of this we complain ; in this precisely you are to blame. No law exists against adorning suitably these cold walls, against closing every chink through which an unfriendly breath could pass ; and diffusing, through the house of God, that genial warmth, which cheers your most retired domestic apartments. One obstacle only prevents, you are not solicitous to attend divine worship, and therefore make no exertions to accommodate the house
of

of God to the delicacy of your constitutions. Alas ! if our duty to God were as near our hearts as our pleasures, his temples would not be less frequented than those of pleasure, or be less studiously prepared for our reception.

If it be difficult to find, even amongst the best disposed, that uniform regularity, which should characterize the proper observance of the Lord's day ; why should we hope to find religion, or its fruits, beyond this little circle ? Is the Lord's day a *holy* day to the world at large ? Is it not, amongst the higher classes, confounded and insulted with all the worldly pursuits, with all the frivolous amusements, and with all the vices of the other six ? And, amongst the lower and labouring classes, is not this holy day, instead of serving the purposes of innocent relaxation, and necessary acts of devotion, profaned by the most decided neglect, and by distinguished intemperance ; which even is carried so far as to encroach on the labours of the ensuing week, to the ruin of their families, and to the injury of those who depend on their industry ?

The wisdom and piety of Government have, on this holy day, closed the courts of justice ; but that wisdom and piety have not been able to make the worldly or the avaricious, the lawyer or his client, defer their business to another day : or, if it may not be deferred, might it not, at least, be suspended for one hour on this day ? that each, O !

vain and forgetful! might seize on the blessed occasion, to plead his cause before the Judge of all men, in the open courts of the house of our God.

So swiftly pour in the irresistible and most important demands of pleasure and dissipation, that one day in seven, plundered from the rapid hours of a short winter, would seem, to the breathless votaries of pleasure, the young of either sex, a sacrifice of time not to be compensated. Throughout the short season they run in the ring of giddy folly, nor do they think it time to check the whirling dizziness, till the sinking constitution no longer sustains the repetition. Many a native rose on the cheek of the blushing virgin hath been exchanged for ever for deadly paleness, after one pleasant winter. The purchased roses of the ensuing winters are of far other growth, and beauty, and fragrance.

Mothers, hasten away with your precious and lovely daughters to the simplicity and virtue of a country life, far from the dissipation, and contagion, and consumption, of this unwholesome and irreligious town: if, perhaps, you will consult their health, and their principles, in spite of your partial fondness for displaying their charms to the idle gaze of cold and insensible youth, who have lost the spirit of men, and are captivated by gold alone. But, were young men even ingenuous and susceptible, no attachments are formed in the hurry of dissipation; the waxen hearts of youth are de-
formed

formed by a thousand broken impressions, nothing durable or distinct is marked in the rapid succession of images. Under such agitation the sacred bonds of marriage do not knit. But principles are injured, fortune is injured, the frail flower of beauty is injured, by late and splendid watching; and even at this moment, even at this advanced hour of the day, the dissipation of the last night, protracted to the morning, detains a prisoner, on her disturbed and unwholesome pillow many a virgin, whose pious prayers, and pure religion, should at this hour adorn the temples of her God.

What shall we say, or how shall we defend the grave matron, whose neglect of her duty to God, on this day, and whose folly, pursue her beyond the period of youth? Without the same temptations, or the same inexperience, she is still devoted to trifles, to noisy dissipation, and to vicious fashion. Instead of beginning to discover the vanity of the world, she grows more enamoured of its vanities; she is still seen in every giddy circle, running the perpetual round of folly; and that consequence, and those attentions, which her declining attractions can no longer challenge, she seeks, by ministering to the general tumult of dissipation. For this, without perhaps having in excuse, even the pardonable weakness of indulging her children, for she may not be blessed with any, she throws open her doors with expensive entertainment; she contends with every rival, in every folly; and, perhaps,

perhaps, finding six days of the week preoccupied and engaged by her competitors, she completes her triumph, by establishing her stated revels on this holy day; on this holy day she displays all the splendour of her wealth and extravagance; on this holy day she is rejoiced by the whole tide of the fashionable, of the free, of the profaners of the Lord's sabbath; on this holy day she spreads her tables in all the magnificence of luxury, and prepares them also for the gratification of other appetites, more keen than nature ever furnished, for the insatiable hunger and thirst of rapacious avarice and mutual plunder. Thus she obtains her grand object; she becomes fashionable, but, she has surely forgotten the commandment of the Lord, who has ordained the seventh day to be kept holy.

And yet are female folly, and female violation of the duties of this day, far short of the profaneness of men: men, who ought to guide the opinions of the weaker sex; men, whose superior knowledge should incline them to treat with due respect the laws of their country, laws which themselves have solemnly sanctioned; men, whose exalted spirit should look with humble dignity up to their Maker, and their God: these very men are found to profane this holy day with the most studied offence.

In a celebrated house, instituted, as I have understood, with other views, for rational converse and reasonable relaxation, but now perverted, by the

the dire spirit of play, from its first purpose, so completely hath the Lord's day been insulted, that a worthy member of the original plan, if I be informed aright, with difficulty obtained a short respite from their incessant labours of ministering at the altars of Mammon, for the servants of the house, of an hour or two, during divine service, to enable them to attend the worship of God.

That such a permission should be a matter of question, must seem almost incredible to a Christian congregation, and in a Christian land; but such is one effect of the neglect of religious duties, that the heart becomes hardened to the entire forgetfulness of God. And such is the effect of the dire thirst of play, that, if any religion remain trembling about the heart of man, it banishes it away. Humane feelings it has none; it feels for no necessities but its own; it brooks no interruption. The devoted worshipper and victim of Mammon, is not contented with lavishing incessantly during the whole week his health, and his fame, and his fortune, in deep and ruinous games; daily and nightly, and throughout this holy day, he watches and wakes in his temple, and casts down before the monstrous and insatiable idol his entire hopes of earth and heaven, upon the rash hazard of the die.

I stop here, for human depravity can no farther profane the religion of this holy day.

I have

I have detained you, perhaps, too long, and will now make a speedy conclusion. God punishes the iniquity of nations, with fearful severity, when his just indignation is kindled against them. History furnishes many examples; this eventful hour furnishes terrible examples. We have escaped in part, in part we feel the vengeance of Heaven: bloodshed and war have passed over us; the destroying angel has passed over our doors, but our public credit is shaken. They who have trusted in uncertain riches tremble. Let us trust alone in God; let us look up to him alone; let us conciliate his mercy through Christ, by turning to him with deep repentance, and firm amendment of life. And, as the earnest of our pious resolutions, let us, with reverence, approach his table, and partake of the inestimable blessings we derive from the commemoration of the merits and death of our most blessed Lord and Saviour.

SERMON IV.

I. THESSALONIANS, V. 15.

“*QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.*”

THE gracious revelation, vouchsafed to mankind in the Gospel, not only informs us, that the holy Spirit of God watches over and sanctifies his humble servants, thereby supporting their hopes and encouraging them to press forward to eternal life, but the same revelation also charges us to profit by the suggestions of the holy spirit, and warns us, at our peril, not to neglect his admonitions. For if we be made capable of receiving him, so can we also expel him from the temple of our hearts; if we may be illuminated by his heavenly light, so may we also quench it, and remain in utter darkness. The great apostle was justly apprehensive of the rashness of men in this respect, and therefore he solemnly charges the church, that they *quench not the spirit*.

Although we no longer behold those signal effusions of the holy spirit, by which the apostles and many of the first Christians were distinguished, such as the gift of languages and the power of working miracles, which appear no longer necessary

fary to the established maturity of the Gospel; we have, I trust, no less real, though less illustrious, evidence of his influence. Our Lord has promised his assistance to the end, and, I trust, we have no reason to consider ourselves deprived of the benefit and blessings of his promise. Many of the offices of the holy spirit, as described in Scripture, are the permanent and perpetual inheritance of the church---The holy spirit is the comforter, the spirit of all truth, the sanctifier---He inspires good thoughts, and graciously assists the imperfect efforts of human piety.

That the weakness of men, and their inability to pursue with equality the direct path of righteousness, require the divine aid, we shall all be ready enough to acknowledge: for we know, that we are sinners, and that we cannot cleanse ourselves in the sight of God. *There is none that doeth good, no not one: (Ps. xiv. 1.)* The utmost degree of purity the best of men can pretend to, extends little farther than to the general regulation of their actions; and even in many things we offend all. But what man can bear the light of God's all-seeing eye, when directed to the impurity of his mind?—*Cleanse thou, we beseech thee, O God! the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy holy spirit (Liturgy;) for thou art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity! (Psalms.)*

To frail beings, sent, as we are taught, into this world, to earn a title to immortal life, by contend-
ing

ing against a thousand temptations which assault us from without and from within; obliged to combat at once with the world, the devil, and the flesh; it is a most gracious and necessary exercise of the divine mercy, to support us by such an auxiliary as the grace of God's holy spirit. Our blessed Lord has promised a full measure of this grace to his church. But may we not justly conclude, that since it is so necessary it has never been altogether withheld from men, although it may be vouchsafed with more light and in greater abundance to the pious Christian? May we not suppose, that the bosom of every man of every age and nation, so long as he is not entirely depraved, is, and hath been, in some degree, enlightened by this divine illumination?

This divine light, which we best know by the name of *conscience*, has never been entirely withdrawn from men---the children of a common father. Christians acknowledge it, indeed, as the grace of God's holy spirit; but mankind have always experienced its influence on their hearts, however ignorant of the genuine source from which it is derived.

And this grace of God doth enlighten and assist, but it doth not compel; and men are at liberty to avail themselves of its gracious light, or to reject and shut their eyes upon it.---This is our state. And this is the subject which I have chosen for your serious consideration.

F

When-

Whenever the grace of God, the influence of his holy spirit, or the power of conscience is mentioned in Scripture, it is but too strongly acknowledged, that we may reject all their good suggestions. For we are constantly warned not to abuse our liberty, lest the grace of God should be withdrawn from us; lest we grieve his holy spirit, who will forsake us; and lest we so blind our conscience that our light may be darkness. *We beseech you, says St. Paul, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: (II. Cor. vi. 1.) Purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God: (Heb. ix. 14.)* Conscience is called *good and evil*; and in some it is said to be *seared with a red hot iron: (I. Tim. iv. 2.)* where the just efficacy of its sensibility is destroyed. *Grieve not the holy spirit whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption: (Eph. iv. 30.)* And in the words of our text, our power of resisting the influence of the holy spirit is represented by a still stronger figure--- *Quench not the spirit: (I. Theff. v. 19.)*. Extinguish not that divine light, which God has most mercifully vouchsafed, to guide your wandering steps. It is possible for a man not only to shut his eyes upon this blessed illumination, so that it shall not serve to aid him to pass through the temptations which now surround him, but he may quench it for ever. O lost hope! O most forlorn and tremendous darkness! May God of his eternal mercy, through Christ, never so totally abandon

us sinners. And, however we may abuse our liberty, and resist his grace, by daily transgressions, we implore him never to withdraw from us totally the light of his countenance, and never to cease to illuminate, with his holy spirit, the darkness of our sinful minds.

Do not suffer yourselves, brethren, to hear with impatience this most serious subject.---Let not the careless imaginations of your hearts tempt you to disregard the slight and unfrequent warnings of God in your breasts. Your having, perhaps, nearly gotten free from the troublesome intrusions of such a secret monitor, whilst now you pursue at ease your pleasures, or your follies, or your vices, is a state of false tranquillity, if such it may be called, with which I trust in God he will not long suffer you to be beguiled. No, my brethren, whatever be your errors, or your follies, or your sins, may you feel the full weight of shame and compunction for them! Do not consider mine an uncharitable wish. God hath in his goodness annexed painful sensations in proportion to every degree of sin; and so long as they are felt, there are still hopes of the sinner. Deceitful and fatal is that insensibility, which feels no pain, when the deadly mortification has already overspread and possessed itself of the sources of life. If we would live, or hope for salvation, the health of the body, and the health of the mind, must be guarded against morbid insensibility.

If there be any present, in whose heart thy holy spirit is quenched, suffer it not, O God, to remain extinct for ever! Re-lumine, with thy saving grace, thy pure and sacred flame in our consciences, that we may abhor our own sinfulness, and hasten to repent.

In order to warn you more sensibly of the danger and possibility of quenching the spirit, I shall lay before you some examples of the steps which lead to such a dire estate, and exhort each to look into his own heart, and to consider his ways.

When the watchful care of parents and of preceptors is remitted, and the advice of experience and religion ceases to be repeated; and when the emancipated youth rushes into the world, with all his passions awake---how shall he preserve his ways free from all pollution? Can the silent admonitions of conscience, and the gentle suggestions of God's holy spirit be heard in the tumult of wine?---in the headlong career of passion?---in the furious avarice of play?---in the dire thirst of vengeance and of blood? If even youth be not hurried to these fatal extremes at once, what shall preserve the mind alive to the impressions of God's grace during the general misapplication of their attention, and the general depravity of example. What though the young become not in avarice and in blood like Ahab; not like Jezabel in infidelity, in wantonness, and
pride;

pride ; can they long retain their innocence, or their love of God, when they go forth into such a world as this ? He, who a child was taught to venerate the name of the Most High, as a man daily hears it profaned, till the familiar sin ceases to offend. Even, monstrous ! the purity of female lips learns now to insult the holy name of God. He, who a child was taught to abhor a lie ; a man is familiarized with falsehood in all its forms. Nay, in the contests of ambition, men are taught to disregard the solemnity of an oath, which appeals from their own consciences to the Searcher of Hearts. How deep must they have plunged in darkness ; how profoundly must they have quenched the holy spirit, who presume thus to profane his residence in the temples of their breasts !

But shall we proceed ? In every circumstance, how doth the world contradict the sentiments of virtue instilled into the breasts of youth ! Are they instructed to govern their passions ; whom do they see giving the example ? Are they taught the laws of God ; whom do they see obeying them in fear ? Are they taught from sacred history, or from roman or grecian story, to venerate the illustrious examples of patriotic virtue ; how soon do they learn in the world another lesson, and venerate gold alone ! Are they taught temperance and sobriety ? The world will better instruct them in gluttony and wine. Are they taught the excellence of the soul, beyond its mortal habitation,

the body? The delights of the table will soon change their opinions, and give the sensual appetites the great triumph over all the feast of reason, or the flow of soul. And they will become perverted not by the silent seductions alone of their vicious palates, but they will learn, and treasure up deep in their hearts, the profound wisdom, and the vast research of culinary philosophers. For he is not worthy now the table of the great, who can only eat; that even the vulgar can execute; the learned sensualist must descant and lecture. When we add the various seductions of passions and temptations, which contradict in the world every good principle of instruction and education, how can it be hoped, that the mind shall not be estranged from God; unless his grace be poured upon us, almost as miraculously as was the signal effusion of it, as on this day on his holy apostles? Unless it should *please him, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe*: (1 Cor. i, 21.) Unless upon the weakness of our labours in the Lord, he may bestow his fruitful grace; and that the ministers of his word may happily stir up, in the hearts of their hearers, some attention to his neglected laws; for within his holy temples alone, is the sacred truth of the spirit of God declared, Religion is banished from the world, and from the polite circles; she dares not raise there her modest voice. It is well that we may here vindicate our liberty in Christ; and well if our voice may reach the ears of the
few,

few, who can be spared from the important cares, and pleasure, and dissipation of the world, to pay on this holy sabbath their bounden duty to the Lord of heaven and earth.

If amongst those who hear me, there should be found one or more, to whom what I have laboured to explain and enforce appears to have little foundation, and to lead the mind towards superstitious weakness or enthusiasm; I answer them in the language of the apostle, *I speak forth the words of truth and soberness.* (Acts xxvi. 25.) *And I beseech them, to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save their souls.* (James i. 21.) Our Lord, in his Gospel, has solemnly promised his holy spirit to influence our hearts, when we sincerely seek the blessing. *If ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his holy spirit to them that ask him?* (Luke xi. 13.) And of this holy influence have not men experience in the suggestions of conscience, so long as they obey the divine monitor within? And have they not evidence of his departure from them, when, by frequent contempt and resistance of his suggestions, they feel no more the stings of compunction for their sins?

It becomes therefore those persons, if any such hear me, to take good heed to their ways, and to suspect rather that they are deficient in something material, than that the Gospel, or the feelings of

other men, are not to be believed. It is not the confidence of youthful folly, it is not the success of vice, it is not the intoxication of passion, which can change the unalterable truths of religion and nature. A criminal course of life may have removed from the recollection or regard of some men their former faint illuminations of divine grace, and their former compunction under less degrees of guilt; so far, that they may now think them to have been the weak and unreal visions of superstitious fears: and therefore they venture boldly to engage in that sin to-day, which yesterday alarmed their conscience; and at which they shuddered the day before. Thus the very internal judgment of conscience is altered, and their state is nearly described in the latter part of the following words of the apostle: *Unto the pure all things are pure, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.* (Tit. i. 15.) They are arrived now to the maturity of habitual indulgence and enjoyment of their passions; and their daring minds, forgetful of their frail possession of life, and of the interests of eternity, seem to disdain the sickly qualms of conscience; and sin appears now a business to be pursued, not to be repented of.

Before he had altogether quenched in his breast the holy spirit of God, his first fraud in trade pained the young merchant; but he can now deal like his neighbours. The green candidate for the
object

object of ambition would wish to have avoided his first attempt at subornation of perjury; but, in the course of the necessary business, he loses his scruples. His first violation of the sacred marriage vow troubled the faithless husband, but now he feels no longer the ties of affection or religion. He, who first shuddered at his own infidelity, can now even imagine, without horror, the justice, nay, the convenience of those profligate morals, which poison the very fountain of his honour, and admit retaliation upon his polluted bed.

The youth, who first recoiled at the deep guilt of seducing innocence, and who learned from the living purity of a pious mother, to venerate the sacred character of the matron, has experienced a dire change of sentiment. Where are now the principles of honour, of tenderness, and of dignity, which filled your bosom towards the sex you were formed to cherish and to love? What has now defiled the temple of your heart? What has changed the generous passion of your noble mind into the sordid thirst of gold? What has curdled your blood, and turned into gall, the tenderest drops in your heart; that now, instead of protecting, you roam about like the evil spirit, seeking whom you may devour? Why do you flight the virgin, unless when you plot her ruin? Why do you court the matron, seeking to pollute the sacred marriage bed? Why are you valiant in profaning his laws, whom alone true courage fears? You follow the blind

impulse of lawless passion, which you have adopted in the place of conscience, and instead of the grace of God. His grace has left you ; you *quench his spirit* in your own breast, and extinguish it wherever you communicate with others.

The pure virgin shed tears of bitter remorse and anguish, when she first believed your fatal and false seductions : then she was innocent, and knew the grace of God. But now you may find her in your streets, a public monument of infamy, forgetting compunction, *glorying in her shame*, and blushing only with the fixed stain of art. And she who a few months past had never harboured a thought, which heaven might not read and approve upon the pure tablets of her heart ; she, whose innocence fled from unknown and undefined error on the slightest alarm from the spirit of grace within the pure temple of her breast---she is now undone ; she has suffered the serpent to beguile her ; she disregarded the admonitions of her conscience ; she listened to the curiosity which would be wise : and now, for awhile, she thinks she is *as a God knowing good and evil*. But heaven, in its mercy to her most piteous fall, has a scourge prepared to call her back (if not yet too late) to a sense of herself ; and the spirit of God may yet revisit her through that severity, and your most christian assistance. But seldom are other species of apostacy from God's grace so happily restored ; because the same evils do not so inevitably overtake them,

them. A man may be a villain in a thousand ways, and still thrive and prosper, and go farther and farther from his God, laughing during his enjoyment of all the pride of life, at those who scruple to offend God, and who speak of conscience. But the frailty of woman, more excusable, meets a speedier punishment, and sometimes a surer restoration. In proof of this, look yonder ye *prodigal children who were dead, and are alive again; and were lost, and are found.* (Luke xv. 32.) Do not a second time reject the grace of God, lest you sink in perdition inevitable. If the spirit of God's grace, after its first extinction in your hearts, be again mercifully and wonderfully relumined, beware, lest if you quench it again, you quench it for ever in utter darkness.

But you, whose bosoms still feel, on the smallest error, the wholesome chastisement of a blessed compunction; you, who, however you cannot be deemed innocent, have not yet so offended the gracious spirit as to have banished him from your hearts; submit yourselves to God with humility, cherish the guardian of your virtue, and purify the living temples of your bodies for the residence of the heavenly guest. For if unfortunately you disregard the pain of compunction, which is the gracious warning of God, to make you avoid sin; if under the false pretext of an uninformed mind, not having been directly taught, that the purpose of your heart is sinful, you run a dangerous hazard;
you

you slight the grace of God, which instinctively speaks in your conscience, and whispers with a low but most intelligible voice, that what you desire to commit is a sin, although you have never even heard it named. Delay not the acceptable moment of repentance; dissemble not with yourselves, how well you understand the suggestions of your conscience, and of your God; admit no false pretence to continue in sin, till accident shall better inform you of the nature of your suspicions of yourself; till possibly, in an evil hour, some one more guilty shall hear and laugh away your wholesome scruples; shall laugh away the grace of God from your hearts; and you shall thenceforward proceed under the insidious sanction, step after step in sin, till finally you *quench the holy spirit*.

Commit not therefore an undefined question of right or wrong to the rash hazard of experience; for without obtaining dearly purchased knowledge of evil as well as good, on most questions, you may determine with the *wisdom of the serpent*, whilst you possess the *innocence of the harmless dove*. To the well regulated mind, on such a question, the good is clear, full of light, evident, direct, is justified on the view; the evil is dark, doubtful, anxious, seducing, specious, requiring excuses, justifications, evasions; tempting the passions, tempting the curiosity. The good, when followed, fills the heart with sweet internal approbation, it
elevates

elevates the mind, it gives courage confidence, it confirms the step, it is full of truth and simplicity, it fears no intrusion : when the evil is committed, the soul is filled with fear, disturbed, debased ; it seeks retirement, it is ashamed, alarmed.

These are the operations of the sanctifying spirit on the mind. This is his sensible influence on the conscience even unexperienced.

Watch therefore over the tenderness of your mind, cherish your scruples, and consider the compunction you feel on any temptation to transgress, as the surest pledge of God's grace, and his witness in your heart. Guard from every violence and injury the sensibility of conscience, as you do the light of your eye ; quicken your attention to his suggestions, and listen with pure and watchful ear to his sacred voice, which speaks audibly to the sincere and humble soul, but which is soon drowned in the tumult of sin ; or to his dull and heavy ear is profound and tremendous silence.

Your conscience must be guarded in health like your senses ; when in this state of perfection, susceptible of every just and true impression, like the eye it will be clear and distinct, it will be quick and intelligent like the ear, not subject to the sickly irritability and foreness of superstition ; but conscience will then see the light of truth, and hear its voice. And the impressions of God's grace will be like the joy of harmony to the soul, and like
heaven's

heaven's light to the eye, delightful, perspicuous, secure.

Obeys therefore, with just religion, every good suggestion of the holy spirit in your minds; watch over and guide yourselves by its light; suffer not its pure and living flame to be disturbed or extinguished by folly or neglect; keep your *lamps ever trimmed* and brightly *burning*, that you may be among the blessed company of the *wise virgins*, whose vigilance entitle them to *enter with glory into the presence of the Bridegroom*. So will this holy light guide your paths securely through every trial and temptation of life, even through the *valley of the shadow of death*, till you shall arrive to everlasting glory, where you shall see God face to face, be sanctified by his holy spirit, and perfectly to do his will in the presence, and through the merits of your Redeemer.

SERMON V.

Preached at the CHAPEL of the MAGDALEN, DUBLIN,
Dec. 22, 1793.

[Several circumstances, alluded to in the following discourse, will be explained, by recollecting the great events which happened about the period of its date.]

MARK xiii. 31.

" HEAVEN AND EARTH SHALL PASS AWAY,
" BUT MY WORDS SHALL NOT PASS AWAY."

THE general decay of piety in the christian world, the open insult and profanation with which the Gospel has been violated abroad, and the cold neglect with which it is treated at home, may possibly appear the previous indications of its falling credit. If such an opinion can be entertained with regard to the Gospel, it must naturally awaken feelings in the minds of men, of which we imagine some symptoms have already shewn themselves. The sincere and pious Christian begins to be seriously alarmed, lest men should indeed become so wicked, as to cast away the blessed hopes of the Gospel, and effect the dire purpose they seem to have in view, to plunge the world again into the darkness of heathen night. Other sentiments escape from
the

the unbeliever: he does not indeed yet openly insult the faith of his country, but like a cool politician, he looks abroad, and whilst he scorns the efforts a nation has made to obtain their liberty, whilst he feels some degree of just indignation against the fury of their excesses in this pursuit, he seems to acquiesce in the necessity of at last overturning religion, and opening the eyes of men. He seems to look with complacency upon the impious cruelty to the church, and upon the horrible apostacy of some, who have again betrayed their Lord and Master for a few pieces of silver. He seems to applaud the traitors as converts to truth, and to look forward, in silent and prophetic triumph, to the approaching darkness, which shall pollute and violate the worship of his native land.

But let not the pious Christian tremble; let not the soldier of Christ betray unworthy fears. The wickedness of man has little power to shake the solid foundation of the Gospel. Let not the infidel triumph; his exultation is premature; the most sanguinary tyrants have sought, in vain, to overturn the religion of Christ. The Gospel has long since, and often suffered persecution; and after each fiery trial, it has issued forth like the perfect metal, which has been *seven times purified* in the furnace.

What then, is not the Gospel extinguished already in one great kingdom, and are not the majority,

majority, in almost every other christian kingdom, either negligent, or ignorant of its laws? And is it not hence to be concluded, that it begins to fall off, and verge towards obsolete antiquity? Alas! we must own much has been done to destroy the Gospel, by injury and neglect. And there is much danger; but we must distinguish where the danger lies—destruction threatens; but we must observe on whom the destruction impends. The danger, then, and the destruction are not to the Gospel of Christ, but to the individuals who reject its salvation. The vast fabric of Christ's church has its eternal foundation laid on the primeval pillars of the world. *The rain may pour, and the winds blow, and the floods may beat against it, but cannot prevail, because it is founded on a rock.* The feeble individual is, indeed, often swept away, and wrecked, and lost in the agitations of opinion; and he is in imminent danger indeed, who neglects to secure himself, by laying fast hold on the anchor of salvation. But as to the Gospel of Christ itself, it is placed far beyond the reach of danger. The Gospel must endure so long as men exist: and so long as their frailty requires its tender indulgence, so long as their miseries require its consolations, so long as their wickedness requires to be restrained by its terrors, so long as their virtues and hopes require to be excited by its eternal promises; so long must the

Gospel endure, and live in the heart, the resource, the comfort, and the terror of men, whatever may prove its external circumstances. It is true we have heard, and we have read of great enormities, of sacrilege, and of abominations in the very temples of God, and of the efforts used to plunge his people into utter darkness: but these attempts are as vain as impious. The sure Gospel of Christ cannot be affected by any such profaneness: it is far beyond the reach of the profane. We may indeed see external establishments overturned, even it might be the very purest. But in the destruction of no establishment, or external discipline, or administration of Christ's church, shall we ever behold the destruction of the Gospel. What human wisdom has framed, or what human imperfection has sanctioned, may be dissolved, or overturned by the same authority. But the Gospel, which is sanctioned by the power and authority of God, shall never be overturned by the wickedness or weakness of man. The church of Christ consists not in human establishments, or in human discipline, but in the various communities of Christians, which make the Gospel of God their rule of faith, and which serve him according to their best understanding of the words contained in his sacred law. This sacred law depends not upon the changing folly of man, but is perpetual, and unalterable, for two reasons: *first*, he, who is faithful,

faithful, has promised the security of the Gospel: and *secondly*, reason and necessity are with the Gospel. We will examine these two positions in order.

In the external sufferings of the church of Christ, or under the shameful neglect of the laws of the Gospel, by those who ought to give good examples, instead of scandal; the *first* and chief consolation of the Christian is derived from the assurance, which he finds in Scripture, concerning the security of the Gospel, and the impotence of every attempt to injure it. In the words of our text, which are repeated by more than one of the evangelists, our Lord himself declares, that his Gospel shall withstand, not only the feeble enmity of unbelievers, but that it shall survive the wreck of this world itself, which they vainly imagine of eternal duration. *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.* In the sublime prophet Isaiah, is a passage almost parallel to this, which, from the appellation of *righteousness* often given in this prophetic book to the Messiah, we are inclined to think our Lord alluded to in the promise of our text. *Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heaven shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein, shall die in like manner: but MY SALVATION shall be FOR EVER, and my RIGHTEOUSNESS shall not be abolished.* *Hearken unto me, ye that know*

righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. For the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool: but my RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL BE FOR EVER, AND MY SALVATION FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. (Is. li.)

In his epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul applies a passage in the Psalms to the lasting duration of the Gospel of Christ, expressed in strong figurative terms, almost of the same import as those of the former prophet. *But unto the Son he saith, thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom: thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness, above thy fellows. And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of thine hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they all shall wax old, as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up; and they shall be changed, but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail. Sit Thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. (Heb. i. 8 to 12.)*

From these, therefore, and various similar passages of Scripture, with which your own recollection may furnish you, we conclude, that the glorious dispensation of the Gospel shall last as long as *those beings*, for whose salvation it was wonderfully contrived, from the beginning of time; for whose sal-
vation

vation it was conducted, through revolving ages, predicted by the prophetic spirit of God, at various periods; provided for in the miraculous separation of a people from the rest of mankind, and accomplished by the incarnation, life, and death of our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. We must believe, that what he promised shall come to pass; that the Gospel shall last to the end; that not one jot or one tittle of the law shall fail to be fulfilled; that no opposition shall have any power to injure it; that even *the gates of hell shall not prevail against*, or shake the solid foundation of his church; and that we shall all finally become *one flock, under one shepherd*.

These promises are our firm security, because, he who has promised is the God of Truth, is faithful and cannot deceive us.

This security, indeed, can obtain no higher evidence; but, a slight view of the reasonableness and necessity of the Gospel, as we proposed in the second part of our discourse, may still afford some consolation (though of an inferior kind) to the pious Christian, who, under the present triumphs of infidelity, feels some degree of alarm.

Such are the continual vicissitudes to which all human concerns are subjected, that it does not seem erroneous to suppose, that not any, even the highest of human concerns, shall be exempted from the law of change. The great and the mighty ones of the earth, those whom yesterday

we saw ruling the world by their nod, are to-day humbled to the dust; and, by a cruel reverse of fortune, we behold them the sport and scorn of the meanest. Kingdoms and empires, embracing all the most powerful regions of the earth, are dismembered and dissolved; and undergo the common vicissitudes of all earthly things. Religion itself seems to be influenced by the fluctuating opinions of mankind. And men, according to their various feelings, will be found to grieve or to rejoice, on the prospect or probability of change in the general sentiment with respect to religion.—To give a better assurance for the security of human affairs, we have no arguments to offer. We abound not in consolations which may serve to comfort tottering grandeur, or to support falling pride. The ministers of religion have no authority to flatter, as to the permanency of the good things of this world; but, with respect to the security of the Gospel of Christ, consolations abound in every view. If it be said, religion itself has submitted to the common law of change in human affairs; we enquire, what religions? *First*, then, false and absurd religions have failed. *Secondly*, religion has failed in some measure, when not of universal obligation or necessity: but truth can never fail, when built on universal obligation and necessity. That religions established on falsehood or ignorance should fail, and retire before the light of truth, is not surprising: nay, it is the glory of truth,

truth, and the happy necessity with which God has invested it, that, as it dawns, clouds and darkness disappear before it. The dark night of pagan idolatry and heathen superstition was succeeded by the morning of reason, under the virtues and the wisdom of the great and good among the heathen philosophers: when their feeble, but cheering dawn had awakened mankind from their slumbers, then the *day-spring from on high* was vouchsafed in the Gospel of Christ; and *the people who walked in darkness saw a great light.* (Is. ix. 2.)

If the superstitions of paganism had first fallen before the light of reason and philosophy, the weakness of reason, and the short-sightedness of philosophy, were afterwards aided and comforted by the strength of the Gospel. If reason discovered God in his wondrous works of the creation, the Gospel discovered him more wonderfully in the glorious work of his redemption. If reason produced the beautiful systems of heathen morality, the Gospel presented its most pure and excellent precepts in the simplest form, intelligible to all men, and confirmed by the most perfect example. If to reason the moral government of the world were inexplicable, the Gospel at once reconciled every difficulty, by discovering to men, that their state here is only probationary. If reason, and that deep principle of love of life which is implanted in the human breast, strained with feeble and unsupported hopes towards the prospect of

another life, the Gospel of Christ confirmed and enlarged those hopes to a blessed immortality of both soul and body. This great doctrine, after which all the sons of men panted; into which wisdom and weakness alike had enquired, in all ages, was the crown of splendour, which was reserved to invest, with eternal glory, the final revelation of God, by his beloved Son. When can that gloomy period arrive, when reason may be supposed to reject light like this? When shall we imagine, that this vigorous and noble faculty shall become so intoxicated, shall be so stricken with madness, as to become the assassin of its own glory, the very suicide of itself? When can we conceive, that reason shall be so distracted, as to desire to extinguish that beam from heaven, which hath touched and enlightened it, and by which alone it lives? The grandest interests of rational man are chartered in the Gospel, and a man must prove a slave, and a traitor to the dignity of his own nature, before he can be induced to renounce the Gospel and them together.

Let us cast our eyes, for a moment, on those who thus dishonour themselves. Perhaps the infidel does not know, perhaps he has never heard of, or never considered the dignity of his nature, as displayed in the Gospel; or, perhaps, the enemy has sown tares among the good seed, which early and christian instruction had carefully planted, and they have sprung up and choked the

the

the seeds of life. O! dark and melancholy ignorance! O! base and ungrateful produce, where better fruit should have been found! They are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life—they are beguiled; and, instead of running the race for the sure prize of eternal and unalterable glory, they content themselves with struggling, and contending, and jostling for the little and uncertain things of this most short and uncertain life. They are beguiled and cheated, not only of eternal life, but of the very objects of their vain pursuit; and rejecting sure hopes of hereafter, they meet only disappointment now.

Ye lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God! ye, who prefer, to the promises of the Gospel, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life---what have you gained in exchange for your soul? The pleasures you have been ever in pursuit of, you have not been able to overtake or to retain: no, instead of them you have rushed upon detested pain, which has fastened upon you, and which you cannot shake off, pain of body, and remorse of conscience. What mighty joys have you derived from your hoarded and ill-gotten treasures? No joys attend them; but anxiety, fear, and the certain assurance, that death will speedily plunder you of all.

What has been the glory of your ambition, ye great, who sit upon the thrones of the earth? or ye less great ones, who bask
in

in the sunshine of thrones? Alas! thrones are uneasy and tottering seats, and giddy pinnacles, where the head reels! and they that put their trust in them are like unto them.---*It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put any confidence in princes:* (Pf. cxviii. 8, 9.) Mistaken ambition is often humbled and mortified: the consideration, the weight, the importance, imagined to attend honours and high stations, meet opposition, vexation, and disappointment perpetually in their way, and their happiness is lighter than vanity itself.

Others, perhaps, who renounce the Gospel, if not to be found among men of these descriptions, may be deceived no less egregiously as to their rash rejection of the highest hopes and the salvation of men. We find them, not only abroad, but even at home, possessed by the disturbed and evil spirit of revolution. Religion, in their eyes, should undergo the common subversion, to which human governments have been subjected; because they find, that under the sacred name of religion some abuses have been sanctioned. But they are blind and rash, who, unable or unwilling to distinguish the purity and divinity of the Gospel, from the unworthiness of its professors, and the additions of men, would involve both in a common destruction.

They object, against the christian religion, the
corruptions

corruptions and additions of frail men.---But where, in the pure Gospel of Christ, can they discover the precepts which authorise such corruptions? They charge the christian priesthood with tyranny, and avarice, and sensuality: away then with tyrants, and avarice, and sensuality; but let the Gospel stand fast for ever. For where in the Gospel is to be found the precept, or the example, which teaches the Christian to be proud, to be avaricious, or sensual? Do we learn such precepts, or such examples, from our Lord or his apostles? Was not our Lord himself the perfect pattern of humility and strict temperance? Did he not oppose every, even the slightest appearance of ambition or pride in his disciples? He taught them humility by his own innocent example, and by the innocent example of a little child; and corrected their rising pride by frequent and strong rebukes.--*He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve:* (Luke, xxii. 26.) When our Lord sent forth his disciples to teach the glad tidings of salvation, his were not instructions to excite avarice. *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; neither scrip for your journey; neither two coats; neither shoes, nor yet staves, (for the workman is worthy of his meat:)* (Matt. x. 9, 10.) No luxurious fare was probably provided for the labourers in the great work of salvation. When, in a more advanced state of
the

the church of Christ, St. Paul gave his instructions to bishops and deacons in his epistle to Timothy, we find them also in the genuine spirit of his divine master. What then can be objected to the Gospel, should unworthy teachers and ministers appointed in after ages even violate every law which it contains? Are the ministers of the Gospel charged with worldly ambition? Let the sin of the ambitious fall upon their own head, but let the Gospel stand for ever. From which of their divine master's precepts have they learned the false and dangerous passion?---*My kingdom, says our Lord, is not of this world: (John, xviii. 36.) He that exalteth himself shall be abased, but he that humbleth himself shall be exalted: (Matt. xxiii. 12.)* If ambition must prevail in the soaring mind of man, it is by the Gospel elevated to a noble and secure object, which shall never disappoint his most ardent hopes. ---The Christian aspires to, and shall attain, a crown of immortal glory. The Christian has been charged with interfering in the state, but does he learn to do so from such precepts as the following---*Fear God, honour the king: (I. Peter, ii. 17.) Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be, are ordained of God: (Rom. xiii. 1.) Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's: (Matt. xxii. 21.)* And to close in a word the charges urged against the ministers and professors of the Gospel, it has been said, that they have been guilty of exciting the

the most cruel wars and persecutions against mankind, for the most trivial differences of opinion. Can this calumny be charged upon the mild spirit of the Gospel? Can the crimes of men find a sanction in the very law which condemns them? Can war and violence be kindled under the very authority of the Gospel of peace? Under the authority of that Gospel, every page of which abounds with the strictest injunctions to exercise patience, humility, brotherly-love, gentleness, and benevolence? Under that Gospel, which, within a few simple precepts, contains more philanthropy, than can be found in all the volumes of those philosophers, who boasted the greatest love towards men?---*Do unto others as you would they should do unto you: (Matt. vii. 12.) Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and do good to them who despitefully use you, and persecute you: (Matt. v. 44.)* I will not multiply quotations which press upon me.

What then can be justly charged upon the Gospel of all the vices, the crimes, and enormities of those, who assume it as their profession, but violate its pure and tender spirit? What, though the folly and wickedness of men may attempt to deform and disgrace its divine simplicity, can it be the part of reason and wisdom to confound and reject together absurdity and excellence? But thus infidelity confounds, and would destroy both together. As well might the malignant

malignant assassin hope to stab the immortal soul through the frail and perishable body. The pure and divine Gospel must survive, whatever violence may assault, or whatever changes may overturn the temporary systems of discipline or administration, which the wisdom or folly of men may connect along with it. So long, therefore, as the Gospel remains our unimpaired possession and inheritance (*and not even the gates of hell shall prevail against it* to wrest it from us), to it we appeal for our religion, and the doctrines and precepts of our religion: let those who violate its laws look to themselves and their evil pretences; but let the Gospel of Christ endure for ever, the holy and revered fountain of our eternal hopes.

Clouds, indeed, and darkness, and the mists of error have at various periods hung upon the light of the Gospel, and hidden its blessed face from the eyes of men. And then the storm has beaten, and the tempest has blown; and in the convulsion the world has been terrified, as if the end had come, and that some false enchantment, about to be dissolved, was going again to involve all in darkness and terror. But the darkness and the convulsions have been generated only in the atmosphere which envelopes our little world. The glorious luminary is far, far above, undisturbed, unclouded; and, when the agitation ceases, he will look out upon the world with more perfect brightness and splendor. Perpetual vapours will
indeed

indeed arise, and perpetual storms will be generated by the follies and the passions of men here below, and be perpetually succeeded, even in the darkest lands, by the purified splendor of the Gospel, till the final consummation; when *the heavens and the earth shall pass away*, but the words of Christ shall shine for ever and ever.

When, therefore, neglect afflicts, or changes threaten our religion, let no vain fears terrify the sincere Christian, or vain exultation escape from the lips of folly. Let us not imagine, that the secure and eternal revelation of God, for the accomplishment of which he provided from the beginning a wonderful chain of events, can be confounded in the fall of the frail establishments of men, which adhere to and deform it. Neither let us be tempted to suppose, that the period can ever arrive, when this revelation can be superseded by the weak efforts of reason; or in any respect cease to be necessary, so long as mankind shall continue of their present nature.

The religion of the Jews was established, indeed, by God himself; but only for a particular purpose, which has been accomplished in the birth of the Saviour of mankind, who was destined to spring from this people. The religion of the Jews is partial and confined; therefore might it be done away, and cease altogether, having fulfilled the purposes of its establishment. And we may be assured no vestige thereof would
 remain

remain at this day, were it not reserved as a standing miracle to attest the divinity of the Gospel, by the unparalleled situation of this singular people, the Jews; and were it not reserved for the grand and final accomplishment of our Lord's prophecies, which foretel the restoration of this people, and their conversion, when we shall become all one flock, under one shepherd.

But the Gospel of Christ differs essentially from this religion, and soars above it and every other, in the extent and magnificence of its objects. Were it a system suited to some particular circumstances, it might, like the Jewish religion, be superseded; or, like human laws, cease to be regarded, when the legislators, or people, for whom they had been framed, should, by the vicissitudes of things, have been changed in their circumstances, or should be no more: it might then fall into disuse, and sleep with the laws of Solon and Lycurgus. But, no: this last and final revelation can never be done away, because it is perfect; it can never be unnecessary, because it applies to all men, and to every condition of men: it is of eternal necessity, and of universal obligation. If we then blindly reject the Gospel, what substitute shall we find?---*Lord, to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life: (John, vi. 68.)* Shall we set up reason against the Gospel? Look back upon the feeble imbecility of reason in the most cultivated periods of its vigorous youth.---

Look upon it now, where presuming upon its mature and manly strength, it pretends to walk independant of the Gospel. Alas! what a lesson doth our vanity receive? It seems not the manhood of reason, but the childish folly, the drivelling dotage, or rather the dire subversion of this noble principle by frantic madness. The Gospel of God has been rejected and stigmatized as the origin of every abuse: the temples of God have been profaned by the most abject mummery: the immortal soul has been condemned to *eternal sleep* by the voice of mortal folly: the decrees of madness have, by a single fiat, robbed the Christian of his elevated hopes; cast him down from high Heaven into eternal darkness; torn his last remaining consolation from the breast of misery; confirmed the prosperous villain; aggravated the desperation of despair, and degraded man below worm; for which alone, say they, is destined the wreck of the fair machine of his body, and the remains of his rational soul.

The proud have robbed us, they have slept their sleep, the waters of the proud have gone even over our souls. They compassed us about on every side; they have digged pits, but are fallen into the midst of them themselves. Turn thee again unto us, O Lord; lift up the light of thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole. (Psalms.)

No; without the light of thy Gospel, O Lord, we cannot walk in safety. Whilst pride and op-

H

pression

pression possess themselves of the earth, and whilst virtue and worth groan under their yoke, thy Gospel alone can vindicate thy ways to the children of men; thy Gospel alone, which reigns in the heart, can reach the criminal, whom the short and feeble hand of human laws cannot touch. The terrors of thy Gospel alone can shake the guilty conscience, and arrest the uplifted arm of secret vengeance. The consolation of thy Gospel alone can exalt the dignity of suffering innocence, and elevate the hopes of sinking misery. And whilst men shall continue on this earth, a vain and feeble race, composed of jarring contradictions, of wisdom and folly, of vice and virtue, of frailty and perfection, of benevolence and cruelty, thy Gospel, O Lord, will be necessary to reconcile them to themselves, and above all *to thee*. And whilst on this earth no sincere joy, no permanent comfort can be found by the sons of men, who having pursued in vain, through every devious path, delusive and ever-flying happiness, are obliged at the last, recoiling from the horrors of the grave, to launch out their hopes towards the haven where they would be, towards the prospects of a future and happier state. Thy Gospel, O God, will be ever the safe pilot, the heavenly guide, the blessed anchor to assure their hopes, and to fix them on immortal happiness. And when *heaven and earth shall pass away*, and when *faith and hope* themselves *shall cease*, the christian *charities shall never fail*,
and

and thy words, O Lord, shall not pass away. But still the benevolence, and the love, and the peace of thy Gospel shall continue to eternity; the immutable law by which the spirits of the just made perfect shall cement their blessed communion, and encrease their ever-growing happiness to all eternity.---So that of thy government and peace there shall be no end: (Is. ix. 7.) Amen.

and thy words, O Lord, shall not pass away. But
thill the benevolence, and the love, and the peace
of thy God, shall continue to eternity; the im-
mutable law by which the spirit of the just made
perfect shall continue their blessed communion, and
enlarge their ever-growing kingdom to all crea-
tures. -- So ends of the poem, and thus says
God to us all: (12. 12. 7.) Amen.

SERMON VI.**II. TIMOTHY i. Part 10 Verse.**

"WHO HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT."

IF there be any subject within the reach of the human faculties worthy of serious investigation above all others, that subject must be an enquiry concerning a future life. To the magnitude of this enquiry nothing which concerns the interests of the present life, however pressing, can bear any proportion. It may seem to a superficial view, that our first and chief concern is with the existence we actually possess, and not with one of which we have had no experience, and which, if even certain, may be remote. It may seem (nay let us not affect to dissemble the truth) it *does* seem to the majority of men, and the opinion daily spreads wider, that our principal concern is with the comforts and enjoyments of the life we actually possess, and that we should comparatively trouble ourselves little about another. And in this opinion we should be perhaps sufficiently correct, were it not that one material circumstance

is overlooked, were it not that it is built on one dangerous error.—Men do not take the trouble to observe that this life is intimately connected with another; they fallaciously suppose this life to be a state of independent existence. If, then, they either are or can be mistaken in such a supposition, the consideration of a future existence and its connection with the present becomes an object of such mighty consequence, that the value of even life itself sinks in the comparison.—For, when a future and endless existence is supposed in any respect to be influenced by the business we are now engaged in, it would be madness to leave out of the account so important a consideration. Thus the existence of futurity, if certain, or even probable, however yet unexperienced, however distant, is of more value than the present in proportion to its extent; that is, because futurity is an endless state, and because this life is short and transitory in proportion as the vast ocean is to a drop of water, or as eternity is to a fleeting moment.—Our future life not *only* relates to the longer period of existence, but it embraces this and every moment of our existence; it not only affects the concerns of this life, but absolutely changes their scope and their value.

But if there be no future life the rewards or punishments of which at all depend upon this—then let us follow uncontrouled the suggestions of all our inclinations; *let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.*—

die.—If there be no hereafter; let our passions have free indulgence now, throw the reins loose upon the neck of neighing sensuality, satiate avarice with Mammon, and vengeance with blood—only guard against the feeble sword of the law, only be careful to evade blind and hood-winked justice. If there be no hereafter; and if, as the voice of foreign philosophy proclaims, *death be eternal sleep*; away with religion and the vain ministers of religion—and let the blood of his priests be the last sacrifice to their God.—For what is religion? Is it not to pray for God's blessing, to deprecate evils, to implore his forgiveness for our transgressions, to submit ourselves to his good providence, to hope in his mercy?—But, wherefore all this interruption to the serious business and pleasures of life, if we be to die eternally? The righteous do not here alone obtain God's blessings, or escape his punishments; his forgiveness would then be nugatory, if he punish not hereafter. The world, and all the enjoyments of the world, are possessed by those who serve him not.—Behold the blasphemous, who insults, instead of venerating his name; behold the impious, who flies in his face with presumptuous sin; behold the adulterer, the oppressor, the enemy, and the avenger, *Yet his sun shines upon them, and his rain falls alike upon the just and the unjust.*—Innocuous thunders roll over the head of guilt, and strike the innocent; and impotent storms lash the compact and firm timbers

of the vessel in which he rides to the Indies in quest of gold and crimes, or hastens to traffic in human misery, depositing the cursed Mammon on peaceful shores, and plundering them of life and dearer liberty, whilst his triumphant sails are swelled with the sighs of his fellow men. O! since the justice of Heaven visiteth not for these things, what shall we say of the innocent and the oppressed, whether swarthy Savages or wretched Christians? are they not of all men the most miserable?—And if hereafter no compensation shall be made for their sufferings, would it not be better to banish all name of virtue from the world?—Would it not be better that the meek and the oppressed, the poor and the afflicted (the great majority of men) should rise against their tyrants, become the oppressors in their turn, and transform this fair world into a den of tigers.—Look abroad; is not this horrid state begun? Is not virtue, as well as religion, banished from a once happy country? Are not his comfort, and his hopes of hereafter, plucked from the breast of meek and suffering penury? And is he not become a furious and savage beast of prey? Are not the bonds of society torn asunder, and its principles rooted up, whilst a visionary equality has erected a new and unheard of society upon murder and upon crimes? Are not these and a thousand horrors, not to be enumerated, the direct and necessary consequences of rash irreligion, and of blind and savage

atheism, which has ordained that pollution and extravagance shall usurp the temples, and be seated on the altars of the Living God?

I have not turned from my subject to call your attention to these sad distractions which have more or less involved all Europe, and by which we too must suffer. But these sad distractions are near the heart of every thinking man, and cannot fail to excite our enquiries to investigate the probable causes of such excesses. Political enquiries, the little and mean worldly interests of men, are not indeed subjects in general suited to the dignity of this place. We condescend therefore, to touch only on those which involve something higher than the temporal affairs of princes.—And we will not hesitate to pronounce, whatever other causes may be assigned for the present and past enormities committed in a neighbouring country, that they are almost principally owing to irreligion—that they are the necessary consequences of blind atheism, and of the denial of a future state. As such, they have suggested our present subject; and as consequences so momentous and terrible may attend such opinions even in this life, nay even in this kingdom, amongst weightier reasons it will be admitted as one sufficient to stimulate us to a serious consideration of our future existence.

When we turn our attention to this great subject, we perceive at once that it is capable of a
two-

two-fold consideration. We see that the evidences for our future existence are to be derived either from the deductions of our *reason*, or from the light of *revelation*. We quickly perceive also, that, on this high subject, our reason cannot establish any conclusions so certain, as to preclude the necessity of appealing to information of higher authority. We know, that this high subject has, in all ages of the world, and in every nation, exercised the brightest talents of the wisest among the sons of men; and that the event, however favourable to our better hopes, has not been so decisive as to force conviction upon all mankind. We know that the belief of a future state has formed the ground-work and basis of every religion on the face of the earth; inasmuch, as we have already hinted, without this belief religion cannot exist. We know, that the best and the wisest of men, the philosophers, and lawgivers of the world, have been themselves persuaded of the truth of a future state, and both by their writings and institutions have endeavoured to fix the important belief in the hearts of the rest of men.— And they would have succeeded universally in their excellent endeavours: the belief of a future state, in spite of the ignorance and inattention of the majority, would have been impressed with the most unshaken conviction on all; had not the pride of other men, also calling themselves philosophers and wise, contended for the contrary opinion, *they*
have

have said, and they now say, that death is eternal sleep, and they have found, and will always find enough to accept their sad and degrading opinions.

—They will find them among the gross and ignorant, among men who will not or cannot reason, and among the corrupt and profligate; who feeling themselves obnoxious to punishment in another state, through fear of worse, would willingly embrace the desperate and comfortless hope of annihilation; and be contented to sleep a cold and eternal sleep in the grave. The vices, the passions, and the fears of men, being placed in the scale against the conclusions of reason, as to our future life, are thus often able to outweigh in the sensual mind. The authority of corrupted human reason is opposed to the authority of the soundest human reason, and the sincere and feeble are perverted, or, unable to decide, are suspended in cruel doubt. Hence is seen the necessity of recurring to higher authority, if such can be had, to determine the hopes of men in this great question. That authority we have in the sure revelation of God's written word in the holy Gospel of our salvation. On this we rest our comfort and hopes, and the assurance of our calling—to this blessed revelation we turn for the light of life and immortality, when vain philosophy, and dark sophistry, would beguile us of the glory of our nature, and plunge our immortal soul into the darkness of eternal death!

But,

But, though reason by prejudices and passions may be led into error, yet is it capable of conducting us also far in the road of truth, when used with candour and with humility. We do not reject the light of the glimmering lamp to aid us to perform our necessary business in the absence of the glorious luminary of the day.—The rational life of the Christian is like his natural life, divided by day and night alternately; now he walks abroad under the day-spring from on high, and contemplates the magnificence of God's works, by the sure light of revelation—and now he studies his laws, and labours to finish his task in the late evening, by the feeblér lamp of reason.

We will not then reject the aid of reason on the subject of our future existence, but proceed to lay before you, *first*, the consideration of some truths arising from our nature and knowledge of ourselves—and, *secondly*, present to your recollection some of the grand truths of revelation.

In this order (since no man can pretend to refuse to engage in an enquiry of mere reason) we may possibly awaken the attention of infidelity itself, should any taint thereof have crept in among us; and we shall feel the strength of God confirming our weakness. We fallly forth soldiers militant under Christ, with confidence to combat under cover of the powerful artillery of revelation. At all events our courage may serve
to

to confirm our own faith, should we even fail to make any just impression on infidelity.—The forces of infidelity are indeed numerous and obstinate.—Intemperate folly and youthful ignorance, lead the van, stimulated to combat the hopes of future life by heated passions, which hear not reason; habitual and impenitent sin follows, with ears closed up, which dares not to hope—insolent vanity, and false philosophy, blow the trumpet and stir up opposition to the last; yet we give them battle on the ground of reason, having established this one position—*That there is a God.*—This truth we at present assume as known and believed by all.—If any be ignorant of this fundamental truth, or affect to doubt it, we inform him that our arguments are subsequent to this belief, that they depend upon it, and are not to be wasted on him who has not learned the first rudiments of knowledge, and the sublimest truth which reason teaches; we dismiss the dull atheist from our congregation, for he cannot feel the deductions of reason, who is blind to that splendid evidence which proclaims God in all his works.—*There is then a God.*—An eternal and omnipotent Being invested essentially and infinitely with every attribute of supreme excellence.—A Being of infinite power, of infinite wisdom, and of infinite goodness, before all, above all, the author and preserver of all, *in whom we live, and move, and have our being,*
whose

whose providence sustains and governs the universe.

The government of God, throughout all nature, is seen to be wise and uniform—no vain or capricious laws disturb its harmony and justice; the more profoundly they are studied, the more evidently do the wisdom and goodness of the Lord appear in all his works—in all the works of his inferior creation; for in his higher creation, in his rational creation, strange irregularity prevails.—Man, the noblest work of God's visible creation; man, possessed of the most elevated endowments, is alone wicked and absurd; man alone, of all God's creatures, is discontented and unhappy in his situation; man alone appears to be misplaced on this earth; man, who is found either with inverted appetite, grovelling among the brutes, or with exalted ambition aspiring to divinity; man alone violates the laws of his Maker, and sins against his God; he alone sorrows for his crimes, and groans in repentance.—Man, strange and unaccountable man, is the Lord of this earth, which is subject alike to his caprices and to his crimes, as to his power and to his wisdom; man is a mixture of various evil, and various good; the slave and the tyrant, the oppressor and the oppressed, fierce and gentle, benevolent and cruel. His enjoyments are uncertain, his evils inevitable; the innocent suffer, and the wicked prosper.—Alas!
what

what an absolute contradiction is man ! what vanity of vanities is human life !

There are two solutions of this involved and profound enigma. *First*, That God (if there exist any such Being) has abandoned men to the evil imaginations of their own hearts, and that he taketh no note of human actions. *Secondly*, It is believed, that the Creator of heaven and earth, our Lord God, has placed us here in a state only of probation, and preparatory to a better life.

We are to chuse the most rational of these solutions.—The first is loaded with absurdity, and contradicts every principle we can discover concerning the Author of the rest of the creation, who must be also our Creator.—Over all his other and inferior works he appears to exercise the most providential care and wisdom.—Towards men, the highest of all, he must appear absurd and cruel, if he can be supposed to have left them to a blind chance, and to be careless of their conduct.—But if we believe the second, that God has placed us here only previous to a final change to another life ; and that here, by our own application of the powers he has given us, we are to earn for ourselves rewards or punishment hereafter, his moral government wears another appearance, and, instead of being chargeable with every defect and absurdity, the evils of the world resolve themselves into the freedom and imperfections of the beings who inhabit it ; and God's government of man is

an admirable, a just, and a connected system, worthy his eternal wisdom and goodness, and suitable to the high rank we hold in his creation.

In this view of God's moral government, we trust the conclusion of sound reason will be, that this life is only probationary, and that another will be the state of retribution, wherein shall be fully vindicated all the ways of God to man.

The second argument I shall lay before you, for our future existence, shall be drawn from the comparative imperfection of our intellectual state here, and from its strong tendency to completion in another life, wherein God shall perfect that noble work, which he has only begun here, but breaks off unfinished.

In his mere animal nature, man, like every other visible work of God's creation, appears to be of a finished perfection: his form, his powers, his structure, his habits, his instincts, are all adapted to his manner of life. Of this admirable œconomy, the physiologist and the anatomist daily discover convincing proofs; and, of the same admirable œconomy they also discover equal proofs, in the examination of the brute creation, and even of the minutest insect; all are furnished with the most appropriate powers, and formed on a construction the most perfectly suited to their various necessities and instincts. And not animals alone, but the very plants of all the vegetable creation furnish

furnish proofs of the same wisdom and perfection in their structure, from *the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the byssop that springeth out of the wall.*—And from man, considered in his mere animal nature, downwards even to the meanest vegetable, all the creation are subject to one uniform law, and make their regular progress through the stages of production, youth, maturity, and age, towards *death*. Now if we can discover in our own species nothing to distinguish them, nothing peculiarly elevating them above the common nature of animals, we must acknowledge, that neither can *we* be exempt from the common and universal law, *the sleep of eternal death.*—But that distinction and that exemption we feel, and claim in the divine essence of our intellectual soul.

It is not in strength that man excels the lion, it is not in swiftness that he excels the deer, it is not that his flight is more rapid and exalted than the eagle's, or is it that in the depths of the profound ocean he can contend with the leviathan; it is not in these animal powers that he excels the most powerful of God's creation, but in his intellectual faculties he is superior to all. It is in this, O God, that *Thou madest him little lower than the angels, thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands; in this thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*—Yet this divine part of our nature, which elevates

I

man

man above all God's visible creation, is left in a state of imperfection, with which his inferior works are none of them disgraced.—Reason, in this life, never obtains its full and perfect exercise: no man ever here enjoys the portion of knowledge of which his faculties are capable; the most cultivated and the most soaring mind is the most cruelly disappointed; the divine faculty of reason, when it has attained its highest meridian, and the understanding, when it is opened to the clearest perception of the sublimest truths, by the slow steps of indefatigable labour are compelled to stop their progress, and to yield up to disappointment.

The faculties of the mind expand in the gradual advancement through the various stages, from infancy to childhood, and from childhood to youth, and discover, at every step, the progressive unfoldings of the reasonable soul; till manhood at length (if it be permitted to reach that period) displays and enjoys the free exercise of the divine faculty of reason. He observes the amazing field which lies open to his excursions, he exults in its extent and riches, (too often he magnifies it in his vanity) he calls forth all his faculties to aid his researches, he examines, he weighs, he compares, and judges on every side; his powers are invigorated and increased by application—he desires more knowledge, the more he acquires—he wishes to know all that men know, and all that men can know.

know. But this scale of knowledge is too vast for him, he must be contented to be ignorant of what is known to thousands, and what will hereafter be known to thousands; he has only the choice of a little limited sphere for his own exertions, and even in that little sphere of his choice he is not permitted to prosecute his enquiries, so as to satisfy the glorious thirst of his soul. He is withered like a flower—the rude hand of death cuts him off untimely from his noble and worthy pursuits; his eager curiosity sharpened, but not gratified—mines of knowledge explored, but not enjoyed, and hurries him down to darkness, oblivion, and the grave!—Can it be to oblivion and darkness, though it is to the grave?—Can a being, of such perfect goodness as we conceive God to be, delight to mock and interrupt for *ever* our noblest and worthiest pursuits?—Can he wantonly break off, by the relentless hand of *eternal death*, the fruit of reason, just as it begins to knit?—Can God delight to stop the advancement of the intellectual soul, his most wonderful work, and arrest for ever its progress towards the perfection with which he hath gifted all the inferior creatures of his hands?—It is not to be conceived, it is not possible.—Death must lead the soul to God, to perfect knowledge, to science without doubt, without end: and it shall be the glory of reasonable beings to go on in eternal progress, from perfection to perfection, ever approaching, but never to arrive

at the inaccessible and infinite perfections of God !

The evils of man's moral situation in this world, and the interruption of his intellectual life, before it can arrive at the perfection of which it is capable, we have advanced as proofs that man must live hereafter : these arguments, which so strongly evince this truth, with respect to man, do not apply with respect to inferior animals, but serve to distinguish our nature altogether from theirs ; and it is necessary to mark the distinction, since they, who say we sleep the sleep of eternal death, would reduce us to mere animals. We proceed therefore to discriminate between man and brutes.

In the moral government of the world, we cannot conceive that brutes can have any concern, as we cannot conceive that they have any the most remote idea of such government ;—and their lives, so far from imperfection, appear a state of perfect, however short existence ; because we cannot suppose them guilty of any crimes, or objects of any rewards, perhaps at all ; or, if they be so, in any measure, it cannot be supposed that another life can be at all necessary to render them justice.—And also, because every desire of mere animals appears capable of being fulfilled, and every power and faculty capable of being perfected to its utmost extent in this life.

The existence of the mere animal is perfected and accomplished by mere animal culture, by climate,

mate, and by food ; each animal is perfect in himself, and independent even of his own species, except that the accidental circumstances of food, or climate, or domestication, and the art of man may operate some trivial change.—The powers and disposition of the horse are like those of another horse ; of the bird, to the bird of the same species ; and of insect to the insect.—Animal man is to animal man also nearly equal ; whether he inhabit the regions of enlightened Europe, devoted to the gratification of his mere animal appetites ; or whether he dwell in barbarous regions, an ignorant barbarian. It is in the cultivation of their intellectual powers alone, that men excel men beyond all bounds or measure.—The simple inhabitants of the southern climates, who are dropped in the islands encompassed by the vast Pacific Ocean, far from the beams of cultivated science, dread and revere, almost as gods, the power and wisdom of their fellow-men, who explore their sequestered habitations, carrying to their shores death and wonders in their floating worlds. But we fear not their simplicity ; we are not alarmed lest their ignorance should be wafted to our coasts. Our knowledge, and therefore power, would smile at the invasion, were it possible, of a handful of naked barbarians.

The acquisitions of men are another boundary of strong discrimination, between them and inferior animals.

The acquisitions of the mere animal are confined to the individual, and perish along with him. The acquisitions of the intellectual faculties are for the whole species, are extended to them, and are accumulated without end for them to the latest posterity. Thus amongst animals, the steed shall be trained to all the evolutions of warlike tactics; and to all the accomplished delicacy of the bridle; and the dog shall be taught by man something approaching to human sagacity: but these acquirements are not communicable beyond the individual animal: the animal cannot teach them to his own species, they die along with him:—and other steeds, and other dogs, are to be trained and taught by the skill and ingenuity of man, for his own use and service. After all the continued exertions of the art of man, towards the improvement of the domestic animals appropriated to his use; they are nothing advanced; they learn nothing by communication from each other; but the horse and the dog, untaught by man, are the same now as they were before the flood—nor have the most industrious, or ingenious animals improved in their own arts within the long lapse of time. The beaver still constructs his curious apartments, and the bee moulds still her waxen cells with the same unaltered perfection, as when first they began in remote generations.

But man begins in rudeness, and advances to-
wards

wards perfection. Man alone improves. Man alone acquires knowledge and communicates it to his fellow: his knowledge thus communicated grows more abundant and spreads through the whole species, encreasing as well as enlarging in every step of its progress from the first inventor. The philosopher, who has discovered and taught the sublimest truths of science, is himself excelled by his disciples who imbibe all his knowledge, and add new knowledge of their own; and they, in their turn, are surpassed by their disciples, and every generation becomes wiser than the former; obtaining, as the successor of the Great Prophet of Israel, a double portion of their master's spirit. Their knowledge and their wisdom die not with themselves, however suddenly and rudely interrupted by death; but are handed over to posterity an eternal inheritance, an ever-accumulating treasure, to which imagination can set no bounds. For although the portion of knowledge which can possibly be acquired by the individual man is miserably limited and finite, yet the whole stock of knowledge possessed by mankind at large seems almost infinite;—of this knowledge at least it is evidently possible for any individual to become possessed, and therefore for every individual, were they permitted to spend in health, and vigour of application, a sufficient length of existence.—And every portion of this possible knowledge, of which we are deprived by the interruption of death,

is a violation of our just expectations and enjoyments, unless it shall please God most mercifully to continue our existence after death, that we may follow still those pursuits which are the glory and perfection of our nature.—Nay, let us reflect in our present life, how vast a majority of men are, from their situation and circumstances, shut out from all the paths of knowledge; and obliged to leave neglected and uncultivated their divine mind. Let us reflect upon the injustice of their seclusion (as far as it is not their own fault) from the sublimest pleasures peculiar to their nature; and consider how assuredly they may expect from the goodness of their Creator ample opportunity to evolve and enjoy their faculties to the utmost. Look upon the labouring poor, bound down by the necessities of the body, almost to mere animal life: whilst all the wonders of God's creation, recorded in the inexhaustible pages of the book of knowledge, are displayed and taught to the rich and the happy. Look upon whole nations, where darkness and superstition reign in profound night; uncheered by the dawn of science, not to speak of the light of revelation. Look upon the naked Indian, and place his uninformed mind in the scale against those of the Lockes and the Newtons, the glory and the wonder of enlightened Europe. Can we forbear to exclaim against this cruel partiality in human affairs, which has left those in the profoundest darkness of ignorance, whilst these favoured

voured sons of heaven have been permitted, the one to dive into the deepest springs which move the soul of man, whilst the other, with vast and amazing flight, has sprung beyond the boundaries of the world, has launched into the regions of space immense: and, as if admitted into the eternal councils, has calculated the laws by which almighty wisdom regulates the stupendous machine, which moves in celestial harmony the universal worlds. Calculated—yes, and with such truth, that the place and situations of those worlds and systems, to which the naked eye cannot reach, are foretold with exact and unerring precision for ages yet to come.—This is glorious knowledge, by which man, even now in this mortal life, can spring by his active and enlightened mind beyond the little sphere which confines him, tasting beforehand the commerce of celestial spirits, and admitted to behold the uniform wisdom and harmony of the laws of his God!

And shall the great majority of mankind be eternally precluded from tasting this sublime knowledge? And shall the noble and aspiring minds, which, for the good of men, have traced out the pure fountains of knowledge, taste themselves thereof no more?—Shall they, who have unveiled the light of heavenly science, look themselves upon it no more, but remain fast confined in the darkness of the grave, and in eternal death?—Nay, shall we not rather conclude, that death hath already placed them nearer to the fountain

tain of all light; that they are at this moment in the presence of their God, adding to the full measure of intellectual enjoyment, and running the race of intellectual perfection?

Among the various and powerful natural arguments which remain to prove that we shall live hereafter, the following must be enumerated:—the consciousness which arises in the breast upon the commission of sin, and that responsibility which we feel to the author of our being; which always are found to shake the guilty mind with fears, less frequent indeed in the hardened sinner, but never to be entirely banished from the thoughts. These are the warnings of God in the heart, and bespeak in language not to be mistaken, the certainty of a judgment to come. Happy are they who hear them, and believe with repentance to life. We could paint the horrors and the forebodings which agitate the sinful mind, and press upon them the just apprehensions of God's judgments; but we are not obliged to be diffuse upon these strong arguments, for they enforce often their own conviction, and we trust we have not occasion to urge them to any in this congregation. And as we have already trespassed far on your patience, necessitated by our duty and the vast importance of the subject, particularly at this moment, we will entreat your kind attention only to one argument more, of a happier aspect, and, we trust, of a no less convincing nature.

This

This argument we derive from our power of looking forward to futurity, and from our desire and hopes of life.

That the inferior animals are little capable of looking forward into futurity, I imagine will readily be admitted. For the instinctive provision which some animals make for food or rest, or for the nurture of their young, we cannot properly name such an exertion of forethought. Or if it must be called an exertion of such a power, it is one limited to their absolute wants; and as far as it is evidently necessary, and effectually accomplished, it makes entirely for the argument we would press upon your attention. For we contend, that the very power of looking forward in any respect into futurity is a presumption, that we require that degree of power for our necessities.—For the wise Author of all Nature is not found to lavish his powers in vain upon his creatures. To some animals he has granted strength, to some swiftness, to some patient endurance of hunger: to all, instinct to provide for their most immediate wants; but on none inferior to man has he bestowed the powers of calculation, the reasonings of knowledge, or the discovery of arts, because such gifts to the lower animals would be a waste of his bounty, which they could neither use nor communicate—which would serve only to torture and distract them with vain speculations. Shall we say then that God has been more unjust to man than to the

the brutes, and that he has furnished us not only with powers to conceive a future existence, but alarmed us with fears concerning it, and elevated us with hopes; and all this but to disturb or disappoint us?

Nay more, is not this also an evident truth? —That the whole energy of man's exertions is directed towards the future almost alone, even in every period of this his fleeting life? The past is not thought on, except to draw from it instructions for the future; and the very present, the ever-valued present, is sacrificed to its interests—By whom? By the wise, by the prudent;—nay, by even the worldly and the fool. Avarice and worldly wisdom toil and labour in the present, and deny themselves every enjoyment now, in order to secure good things for the future. The very fool, in the extravagance of to-day, is preparing for the debauchery of to-morrow. The indolent and the worthless will cheerfully undertake the business and the fatigue that promise to bring them some sensual pleasure at the conclusion. Even *they* are creatures living for the future, and even they violate the nature of man no farther than that they abridge to as narrow a space as possible their prospects of the future. To-morrow, or after this fleeting hour if possible—is the short excursion of the prospects of him who is called a fool. Next year, or when a few summers shall have brought my labours to bear—or
when

when I grow old—before I die—or when my son or my grandson becomes a man—says the wise man of this world—Let me live so that I shall not fear to die, and then let me live for ever in thy presence, O God ! is the prayer and the hope of him who would vindicate the dignity of his exalted nature !

Man is a creature whose chief existence is yet in futurity : and *that* man will discharge his present duties best, who so regulates his actions, that their good effects shall extend to the greatest future distance. Man is said to be a discontented being ; but let us rather excuse ourselves, because it is our nature to look forward ever from the present, to something better in the future ; nor can we, nor shall we rest, until we reach that final destination after which our soul ever pants. And even in that state, in the very enjoyment of conscious goodness, and ineffable happiness, the prospect of future and never-ending enjoyment, must give the happiness of Heaven its highest character, and its most exquisite relish.—The joys of Heaven itself would be imperfect and mixed with sorrow, could we suppose that they should have an end.—New prospects ever arising, new knowledge ever pouring in upon the gladdened soul, new and ever-various contemplations of the wisdom and goodness of God, and of the glories of his creation, must be supplied, and we may be assured will be supplied to a boundless eternity, to satisfy the in-

finite

finite wishes of the immortal soul—of the soul, which has indeed its birth in this morning of life, but the hopes, and desires, and excursive faculties of which are the natural assurances that it shall never die.

The benign and Almighty Author of our being is too wise and too frugal to lavish in vain the most wonderful of his gifts—those powers by which the understanding of man is capable of looking towards eternal life, and of comprehending, we may almost say, *infinity*, in his little breast. But if his abundant and inexhaustible power might be lavish, his tender goodness would forbear to bestow those hopes and anxious wishes for life, which, if not intended to be gratified, are only an insult and a cruel mockery on the feelings of us, his humble and dependant creatures. That we indulge these hopes, what need is there to prove by argument? Let every man consult his own breast, let him examine the words and actions of other men.—See how all men cling to life, and hate to die.—See how the most illiterate and untaught savages enjoy the fabulous images of their ideas of future life. The impression is universal, the sweet hope is universal throughout the whole family of mankind, from pole to pole. And if any exceptions be to be met, the rejection of these hopes (and sure they are too congenial to our nature to be rejected, when once fairly presented to the view,) stamps a man a monster in the rational world, as prodigious

as if in form he were a man with the head of an unreasoning brute. And since we must conclude these hopes universal, (for we cannot believe a whole enlightened nation has been deluded out of them by the frenzy of a few atrocious madmen); since, I say, we must conclude these hopes to be universally impressed on men, we contend that they are as sufficient ground of assurance, that they shall be gratified, as every other universal impression is found to be. For we find that God has not subjected any being in his creation to any just wants or desires, for which he has not made adequate provision; and that he has fitted nothing for any peculiar use, to which he has not designed that it shall be applied. Nay more; it is not only that he has provided gratification for all the desires of his creatures; but such is the *frugality* of his wisdom, that he has made that very gratification subservient to the most admirable and necessary ends.

I will not detain you with many illustrations; they are obvious, and almost innumerable. If God have subjected every animal to the natural appetite of hunger; for every animal has his bounty provided convenient food, and to every animal has he given a power of obtaining that food; and according to the various nature of the food suited to his wants, each animal is furnished with jaws of the most various forms to prepare his food, and with viscera adapted most wonderfully to its digestion;

gestion; and to complete all, God has provided, that whilst the natural appetite is gratified, life itself shall be sustained. On every creature, however ferocious or feeble, God has impressed the irresistible desire of love. This desire is, even by a late writer, beautifully imagined to extend to the very vegetable creation.—Hence the fields are enamelled with flowers, the trees spread on the mountains, and the gardens are hung with golden fruits.—Hence the woods are vocal with the music of birds, the lions roar in the forest, the serpent burnishes his scales, the fishes wanton in the deep.—Hence all nature is inspir'd, and hence the gay earth itself smiles in every feature; whilst man exerts all his powers to please.—And from the operation of this powerful cause, the grand œconomy of eternal wisdom supplies successive generations to the whole world.

If, for his various creatures, God have benevolently provided a wonderful variety of food, to satisfy their appetites, and of accommodations, to answer their wants; if no desire be found in all inferior nature, destitute of its just and suitable gratifications; shall we hesitate to conclude, that the noblest and the strongest desire of his rational creation cannot be alone exhausted and dissipated in a vain and fruitless hope? If we hunger, the bounty of our Heavenly Father hath provided various food; not only to satisfy our mere necessities, as he has provided for inferior animals,
but

but even to gratify our most fastidious inclinations. If we thirst, we are not, like the inferior animals, confined to the simple purity of the clear stream; but we may drink of all those liquors that confirm the strength, as well as quench the thirst; we may indulge in all those generous wines, that minister often indeed to excess, to the most wanton luxury, or the most shameful intemperance. Yet these pampered desires are low and mean, in comparison of the strong desire of life, and the elevated hope of meeting, in a blessed immortality, the great and the good, and those we love, who have gone before us. As well might we argue that God had given us appetites, and adapted our frame to their gratification, but that they are not intended to be gratified; as to suppose that the hope of living hereafter, which we cannot avoid indulging, is implanted in us but to be insulted and disappointed. It might be said to the hungry, You must not hope to eat; and to the thirsty, It is God's ordinance that you should not drink; your mouth, however formed to receive food or refreshment; your teeth, however formed to prepare your food, your palate to taste, and your stomach to digest, are all a nugatory apparatus for your false appetites;—as well as you might threaten him who hungers and thirsts after the Kingdom of God, that he shall never taste its ineffable joy, that he shall never behold it, or enter therein. Nay, if God could so deal with men in this respect, the cruelty

K

would

would be so much greater than any mockery of the natural and animal appetites, in proportion as the privation of our eternal hopes is greater than any other disappointment. What though the ear should never in this life hear the joyful harmony of the creation, and the music of sweet sounds?—What though the eye should never in this life behold the blessed light of the sun, or the enchanting beauties of God's all-glorious works?—Still ample compensation may hereafter be made, and shall be made for all these privations---when the celestial harmony of the spheres of Heaven shall burst at once upon the ravished ear; and when the eternal glory of God's Majesty, intolerable to the eye of flesh, shall be revealed, and break upon the unimprisoned soul in a blessed immortality.

I have now argued this great subject, not by an appeal to authorities which some might be inclined to question; but by an appeal to your own knowledge of yourselves, and what passes in your own breasts. And God grant that we may be all of one heart and one mind on this great subject.

I have turned your attention to the absurdity and cruelty, which must be charged on the moral government of the ever-wise and good God, unless we admit a future state;—and as they who deny it, reduce man to the class

class of the mere animals, or mere vegetation of the earth, which are supposed to perish, and to be re-produced alternately; I have been led to draw the strong lines of discrimination between the rational and the brute creation—in the interruption of our intellectual progress to which the brutes are not subject—in the perpetual improvement of man, and in the accumulation of his knowledge, compared with the stationary and unimproveable state of brutes—in our consciousness, our responsibility, our fears—but above all, in our powers of looking forward, in our exertions to live only for the future, and in those earnest and just hopes which God's goodness cannot disappoint.

These topics of reflection are sufficient to convince us of our nature, and I trust, if pursued in their just consequences, will be a source of peace and happiness to the sincere mind—a light glimmering and feeble indeed, in comparison to the glory of revelation, but yet not without its humble uses in this our dark estate.

I could here dwell with pleasure and advantage upon the various excellence of this blessed hope of future life: its consolation to the miseries of affliction, its restraint upon the insolence of prosperity; its powerful influence to promote the virtue, and the happiness of men; its authority in deterring from sins and crimes; and above all its efficacy in disarming death

himself of his most dreadful terrors; but I must leave these most interesting topics to your own consideration, or make them the subjects of some future discussion.

I have trespassed already too long on your patience, but the vast importance of the subject must plead my excuse, particularly as it appears to me the duty of every christian minister and reasonable man, to combat, with his best abilities, the dangerous and gloomy opinions, which threaten again to involve Europe in the night of paganism.

The grandest part of my subject still remains—the proof of our future existence from the authority of God's *infallible revelation*. How shall I be able now to devote a just and due attention to this sacred enquiry?—To this sacred authority, the support and ground-work of our feeble reasoning, and of our sure and blessed hopes of eternal life, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

I cannot indeed enter now with sufficient minuteness into this great portion of my subject. But wherefore should it be necessary more than to appeal to the recollection of a congregation of Christians—your faith shall therefore excuse my deficiency—you are not yet to learn Christ.

One truth of revelation I cannot pass over, I must recall it to your recollection—because *reason* could not have even hoped for such an extension of
God's

God's mercy—because *reason* could not have conceived the tenderness of his benevolence, in providing to the utmost, gratification for all, even the remotest of our just and worthy desires. We have reasoned concerning the future existence of the soul; but the Gospel of God has not only graciously confirmed our hopes and feeble reasonings, but has promised, in addition, the resurrection of our bodies, has promised that they shall be reunited to our souls, to partake with them, if we labour to deserve it, a blessed immortality. Those bodies, now connected to them by ties so dear, those bodies so beloved, so cherished, so indulged; those bodies the objects of our mutual knowledge of each other, of our strongest friendships, and of our mutual and fervent affections—those bodies, to gratify which we are rash enough to hazard our immortal souls. Those bodies, says the Gospel of Christ, though they moulder and perish in the grave, are not lost to us for ever, but having undergone a wonderful regeneration by death, and being changed into celestial and immortal, shall rejoin their souls fit habitations for them to dwell in, free from sorrow, sin, or pain to eternity. *They are sown (says St. Paul) in corruption, they shall be raised in incorruption; they are sown in dishonour, they shall be raised in glory; they are sown in weakness, they shall be raised in power; they are sown natural, they shall be raised spiritual bodies.*

When these our spiritual bodies, on the last day, are summoned by the awful trumpet to join their immortal souls—then shall follow the great judgment before the Lamb of God, when all shall receive the final punishments or rewards, due to their conduct in this life of trial. And with the magnificent and solemn description of that day, together with our Lord's own instructions how to prepare best for it, contained in the latter part of the xxv chapter of St. Mathew's Gospel, I will at length conclude this discourse.

When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say unto them on his right hand, come, ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: Naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous (astonished at the imputation of righteousness beyond their desert) answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred and fed thee? Or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in? or naked and clothed thee? or when saw

we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the king shall answer and say unto them, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.—Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: Naked and ye clothed me not: Sick and in prison and ye visited me not. Then shall they also (confounded with imputed sin, as well as actual guilt) answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them saying, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not unto me.—And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into LIFE ETERNAL.

SERMON VII.

Preached at the CHAPEL of the MAGDALEN HOSPITAL,
DUBLIN, Feb. 9, 1794.

GENESIS, III. 5.

*" THEN YOUR EYES SHALL BE OPENED: AND
" YE SHALL BE AS GODS, KNOWING GOOD
" AND EVIL."*

IT was, perhaps, the desire of knowledge, rather than any sensual appetite, which chiefly tempted our first parents to transgress the commandments of God, and which has involved us in the fatal consequences of their transgression.

In a state of innocence, although the sensual appetites might hardly have been awake, and although the fear of death, of which the horrors had not yet been experienced, might not have been formidable, yet the desire of knowledge must have been most powerful; and was but too subject to be inflamed beyond the just bounds. We may form some judgment of the vehemence of the desire of knowledge in a state of innocence, from the recollection of what has passed in our own breasts in the period of infancy, and from
our

our observations on the dispositions of infants now. As soon as reason dawns, and sooner than we can possibly recollect, every effort of the mind is exerted to obtain knowledge. And such is the rapidity of the progress of the mind in useful knowledge (to instance only in the wonderful acquisition of language) at a very early age, that it is calculated that we learn in the few first years of our lives much more in proportion than we acquire in many at a later time of life. The infant is all curiosity; it is ardent in the pursuit of knowledge; it is restless in enquiry, even on the deepest subjects; and we may say, almost at the moment of its developement, the human soul soars upwards to its kindred skies, and launches forward into congenial eternity. The desire of knowledge, we therefore conclude, is not only one of the earliest, but one of the strongest desires of the human breast. And as we observe, that the most powerful propensities, and the strongest desires to which men are subject, require to be restrained within certain limits, lest they should prove injurious, we shall find, that the desire of knowledge itself, however high and exalted above sensual desires of every kind, requires a certain degree of restraint, if we would exercise it with security and advantage. The necessity of this limitation arises partly from the limited faculties of human beings, and partly from their relations to each other. There are subjects upon which
the

the most exalted mind must toil in vain; subjects which are far beyond the reach of human science subjects on which the vigour and the force of the faculties are mispent, because they can come to no certain or profitable conclusions. Such are abstruse and metaphysical disquisitions on various subjects, which it is unnecessary even to suggest. There are also other subjects on which a man is not at liberty to push his researches to the utmost, because they invade the rights of other men; and so far from serving society at large (the great object of knowledge) they disturb its peace essentially. Of this kind of improper desire of knowledge I shall freely mention an instance, because it may be of use to be attended to---I mean that desire of knowledge which is stigmatized by the name of vain curiosity; that restless, mean, and mischievous passion, which occupies itself about the private concerns of its neighbour---not with any good purpose; very far the contrary. Such curiosity deals in the vile gleanings of knowledge only to injure, to defame, to gratify its propensity to maliciousness and evil-speaking, and to fill up the vacuity of an useless and idle life.

But the desire of knowledge in men is not only to be restrained in circumstances injurious to our neighbour's interest or rights, and in those subjects which are naturally beyond the reach of human talents, it should also be restrained on subjects

subjects which accidentally are beyond the reach of individuals, though open to the discussion of other men from similar accident. I shall endeavour to make myself perfectly understood on this point. All the objects of human knowledge are originally, indeed, open to all men: but such is the vast variety of those objects of human knowledge, and so short is the life of man, that no individual can possibly investigate them all. Therefore, let the ardor of any man be ever so great for universal knowledge, he must content himself either to know but a little, and very superficially, of most branches, or content himself with the selection of one or two at the utmost, which he shall be able to pursue with sufficient ability and attention, and be satisfied to depend on other men whenever he shall want the benefit of their knowledge on other subjects. The wisdom of the learned in the laws shall give us protection in peace; the soldier's art shall defend us in war; the chemist shall discover the secrets of nature, which the physician shall employ to restore precious health; the astronomer shall measure the heavens, and count the stars, to guide the navigator's footsteps in the pathless waters---that they may profit by his science, *that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in the great waters, that see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep:* (Ps. cvii. 23, 24.) And the labours of the minister of the Gospel shall be to impress upon the
mind

mind the comforts and the sanctions of God's eternal law; to weed out *the tares* from *his* harvest; to wean the affections from this passing world, and to fix them on everlasting life.

But men are precluded from universal knowledge not only by the shortness of life, but also by the limitations of natural abilities: and, above all, by the necessity of devoting themselves to those various and constant occupations in life, which are not dignified with the name of knowledge, but yet so far engage the attention of the majority of mankind, as to leave to some but little leisure to acquire knowledge, and to others absolutely not a moment.---These occupations are the arts and trades, the manufactures, and all the laborious employments, which are necessary to provide for the wants and the conveniences of life. As to knowledge, this great body of men are dependant upon the few whose lives are dedicated to study; and the studious again must depend on the laborious, for what is necessary to their comfort and existence. Thus the whole body of human society is linked and united together; and the advancement of knowledge and the arts goes hand in hand: the studious pursue with the unimpaired and undivided strength of their attention the separate objects of knowledge, and science is advanced, and daily accessions are made to the accumulating fund of the wisdom, and therefore power, of men; arts are carried to
their

their utmost perfection, and life is improved in all its enjoyments: and thus men are bound together in a stricter union by mutual excellence and knowledge, by mutual wants, and by mutual benefits. We are *every one members one of another in that body whereof Christ is the head*: (Rom. xii. 4, 5.) *And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you*: (I. Cor. xii. 21.) This is the beautiful and useful arrangement of society, where every member has its distinct and appropriate office: and in proportion as this order is observed, are the security of social peace, the advancement of prosperity, and the progress of knowledge.

But if this order be in any considerable degree disturbed; if the pride and ambition of men be desirous of distinguishing themselves in the exercise of science, without having attained the previous requisite knowledge and instruction; the subversion of society must be the consequence. If all men be to legislate, and none to obey; if all be to teach, and none to learn; in what monstrous confusion must society be involved! And of this monstrous confusion a sad example is unhappily presented at this instant to the eyes of the world. It is not my design to dwell on the shocking spectacle. I hasten to lay before you the main object of my discourse.

The desire of knowledge, which caused the first transgression of man, has continued down to our days with unabating vehemence and danger; and the knowledge of good and evil is now more than ever exposed to the desire of every man. The tree of this knowledge is the press, and, like that in the midst of the garden, it is prolific with sin and death to the sons of Adam, and its dangerous fruit tempts every rash appetite. Happily, indeed, the tree of life, the Gospel of Christ, grows beside it unforbidden, and invites all men to stretch forth their hand, to taste and live for ever.

Books are now the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil: books, the repository and the treasure of all the wisdom, and of all the wickedness of men: books, in which winged words are confined, and in which the subtle operations of thought are fixed and embodied, so as to become the common property of all mankind, instead of the exclusive secret of the individual: books, the most wonderful effort of the human mind in their invention, the most wonderful in their improvement, in that astonishing art which from one book propagates thousands of similar and faithful copies, through the quick and the teeming womb of the press. Potent invention! which in a moment communicates to thousands the same ideas! which in a moment directs the thoughts of whole nations into one channel, operating

rating on the minds of men by a potent and rapid influence, unknown in distant ages! How shall we appreciate the value or the danger of this most wonderful art? How inestimable are the benefits, and how mighty are the injuries derived to mankind from this potent invention; from the opening of this wilderness of knowledge; from the discovery of this vast and inexhaustible ocean of good and evil!

In such abundance, and under such temptation, the ardent thirst of knowledge cannot be restrained from deep and frequent draughts. Men must indulge themselves in knowledge, but if possible let it be only of good. Be it our office, as it is our duty, to warn them in this discourse against the evil, lest they taste and die: and, above all, to direct them to the tree of life, that they may stretch out their hand and eat, and live for ever.

Among the vast variety of subjects treated in books, I shall confine my observations to those which relate to *politics*, to *religion*, and to *manners*: a field, indeed, sufficiently extensive and various to engage us in the deepest enquiries, but to which my time will permit me merely to direct your attention for a few minutes.

On the subject of political writings I shall be particularly brief, its discussion not properly belonging to this place. I shall only appeal to your recollection of facts but too recent, the pernicious effects

effects of which are felt at this moment, that political writings may prove a source of much evil. Opinions propagated rapidly, and inculcated industriously, by the active and sudden operation of the press, often excite the public mind into a dangerous ferment, and disturb the tranquillity of the wisest governments.—Principles once admitted, conclusions follow pregnant with mischief; and it may be even too late before the ingenuity and wisdom of experience shall be able to unmask their fatal sophistry. The evil on this subject spreads faster, and sinks deeper in the mind, than on any other, because all men's immediate interests are involved in the nature of the government; and were not a sufficient power lodged in the hands of rulers, to restrain inordinate speculations, the best governed kingdoms would become the sport of every ignorant and wanton innovator. We trust our happy constitution is sufficiently proved by the experience of ages, to obtain the firm support of every virtuous man; and that no crude and wild opinions shall be permitted so far to infect the public mind, as to tempt us to hazard any rash experiment for the removal of those unavoidable imperfections, from which no human establishments can be exempt. In full confidence of the wisdom of our rulers, and their vigilance on this important subject, I touch on it but lightly, and with diffidence, merely for the purpose of turning your attention to one source of dangerous knowledge.

L

But

But the interests of religion are our peculiar province ; and it is the duty of the ministers of the Gospel to watch with jealous vigilance every publication, and every change of sentiment adopted in the various fashions of infidelity ; and even, if possible, every malignant breath which may blight or injure the abundance of the Lord's harvest. It is true, religion is established on the laws of every christian country, and wrought even into their very constitutions ; so that no acts of open violence may with impunity be committed against the professors of the Gospel ; and it is also true, that even temporal splendor and authority lend all their external grandeur and dignity to religion. But alas ! temporal splendor and authority are but accidental circumstances to the pure and humble Gospel of Christ, the genuine spirit of which, in effect, *dwelleth not in temples made with hands, or in principalities and powers*, or on the thrones of the earth, but liveth in the sincere breast, and in the temple of the faithful heart. Temporal splendor and authority are but as the *sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal*, if they support not the pure Gospel of Christ ; they are hollow cases, from which the gem of price is stolen, when christianity reigns not in the heart. Have we not lived to see the truth of this dreadfully exemplified ?—What nation, a few years since, had more of external pomp in her worship, than that which has now become a traitor and an apostate ? For do we not
all

all know that her religion had long been purloined from the heart, by the fatal arts of a wicked and insidious philosophy; and that the outward shew of devotion alone remained, long before she openly denied the cross of Christ? Are not the ministers of religion then called upon to watch the opinions which pervert the public mind—opinions which, like a swarm of devouring locusts, a curse and a plague, issue out on the wings of the *press*, and devour every sentiment of religion, and every blessed hope of the immortal soul?—The plague is abroad—close fast your houses against the pestilence which walketh in darkness, against the deadly contagion—deadly indeed—for false and cold philosophy gives you *eternal death*. The press teems with incessant labour, and scatters multiplied destruction over the land *. Associated monsters meet in close conspiracy against the soul, and, from collected volumes, prepare and concentrate the deadly poison into the compass of a pamphlet—A little pamphlet, a cheap pamphlet, a portable pamphlet, accommodated to the purses of the indigent, and to the understanding of the

* At this period (so confident had infidelity become, in consequence of the changes in France) it was reported in Dublin, that an association had been formed among some ill-advised men, for the purpose of distributing among the people cheap editions of the most celebrated works of infidelity. That report gave occasion to this discourse.

ignorant ; for it is translated from a foreign idiom, and abridged from vast collections. Thus were fatal opinions spread over that devoted land which is now the scene of blood and divine vengeance ; and thus are fatal opinions disseminating now over our happy country, by men who seem to find their interest in plunging us into the same horrors.—Are our rulers awake, or are they uninformed of these more than criminal libels ? Or can it be, that human laws cannot prevent mischief so deeply aimed—mischief which corrupts and hardens the heart, and prepares the wretched for every dire struggle which may give them hope of sharing the spoils of some of the good things in this life, which they are taught is the only one they have to expect.

Whatever may have given encouragement to this evil, it is of infinite magnitude, and should, if possible, be guarded against. If human laws cannot reach to restrain it, the duty falls more strongly on the ministers of the Gospel, to exert all their best efforts to guard against its fatal consequences.—Perhaps religion, from its own nature, may not be considered as the object of human laws, as to internal circumstances, on account of its possessing its own higher sanctions. Religion may be therefore considered (with a little restriction as to its established forms) as the private concern of every individual, nearly unconnected with human laws, and a subject of open discussion.

We

We do not deny the right of every man to enquire fully into the evidences of his religion ; nay, we look upon this as our just title, and our liberty in Christ.—But then religion merits a fair and candid hearing, and an examination before competent and upright judges. False and treacherous philosophy pretends to offer to ignorance, or prejudice, a full discussion and a complete refutation of all the solemn truths of religion, in a few pages of a poisonous pamphlet ; and this dire libel is dignified with the name of the love of truth, and the destruction of prejudice and superstition. In a little compass, a man may deny every sacred truth, and pronounce eternal death upon all his fellow men, who should, by strict consequence, whether their system go so far or no, give loose to all their passions, in order to make the most of their short existence. Writings of this character, and of this compass, are suited at once to the passions and to the indolence of youth and ignorance. No further enquiry is made, perhaps through life—and it is no uncommon thing to find the lightest and most contemptibly ignorant infidels, at almost every period of life, skilled in a few pages of trite objections, and deriving a short creed of irreligion from short scraps of foreign philosophy—a convenient creed, in which they acquiesce, and which, if health and fortune continue, they change not, till they feel or fear the approach of death. I must here suggest to you a remark worthy your attention ;

tention ; it is this—*The human mind can never be at rest, till it has established some opinion concerning its relation to the laws of God, and of a future judgment.* There is in the soul an innate feeling of responsibility, which it dares not disbelieve, till it has swallowed the cold and poisonous draught of infidelity, prepared by some subtle artist, and concentrated from the deadly ingredients of many volumes. A man then becomes torpid : he enquires, and, if possible, feels no more : he devotes himself to the world.

How dangerous are those fatal pamphlets ! How potent a poison may be enclosed in a little phial ! The mortal draught is multiplied by the magic preparation of the press, and thousands in a moment are deprived of eternal life ! Is there a crime so atrocious as to recommend, to propagate, and to administer this poison ?—And the rash, but crafty quacks, are found to deal it out only to the ignorant and to the young : learning and experience know the vile ingredients, and the mischievous presumption of the venders ; they dare not therefore offer it to them, whilst they cheat ignorance and youth of more than life.

The false pretence, which ensnares the youthful and the ignorant mind in the toils of infidelity, is the specious investigation of truth.---*Then your eyes shall be opened, says the tempter, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.* But youth and

and ignorance are incompetent to judge, when they hear but one side of the question, and since in a few pages of infidelity all cannot be contained, and surely all is not stated, which may be said in favour of the Gospel and eternal life. The objection is stated with force, but the refutation is not mentioned. The poison, indeed, is dressed to tempt the greedy appetite; but no antidote or wholesome food is placed near, so as to permit them to chuse. An ancient philosopher imposed upon his disciples, during their noviciate, for some years a solemn silence; they were obliged to listen, not to question.—How much for the advantage of religion and human happiness would it be, were youth forbidden to give any opinion on subjects of religion, or to read any writings of controversy, before the noviciate of folly were past—before the passions should have in some measure subsided?—But, since this cannot be now accomplished, it is to be wished that youth could learn the indecorum of deciding on subjects previous to deep and laborious research, nor, however forward in lighter studies, imagine themselves capable of determining questions yet too heavy for their green years. Even among the men of ripest understandings, those questions are agitated with difficulty and danger.—But let the feeble sex and the stripling boy remain within the walls during the contest; let him behold, and learn

hereafter to emulate his father's glory in combating for the cross of Christ.—But such modesty and such discretion do not, alas ! prevail.

Armed with a pamphlet of a few pages, rash ignorance enters the field of controversy. Every man considers himself sufficient to guide in the concerns of eternity, though his inexperience might not be trusted in the common affairs of life. In the dangers of the sea, who would trust himself in a frail bark, under the conduct of a man ignorant of navigation? and yet here is danger of foundering in the abyss. In the business of war, who would commit himself to be led to certain ignominy and slaughter by the presumptuous and the ignorant? and yet here is the greater danger of eternal death. Let the young therefore and the uninformed beware of those *blind guides*, and let them look upon those books, or men, which speak against religion, as they would on those who write or speak against their best friends : let them not read the one, or listen to the others, but hold them in just abhorrence. If enquiry into the grounds and evidences of their religion be necessary to establish a rational belief ; and if a candid discussion even of the arguments which infidelity has to advance against it be also the business of a rational man ; and we do not wish to deny these positions ; yet still, previous to entering on those important enquiries at the challenge of infidelity, two material circumstances should absolutely have taken place—

place—The first is a certain degree of information and learning in religious knowledge and general literature, which enures the mind to habits of judgment and discrimination—The second circumstance is almost the necessary concomitant of the former, that the understanding should be matured by a certain age; for youth, however forward and bright in talents, are altogether incapable of deciding on the most serious concerns of life, and must be deficient in the preparatory requisite knowledge. If the season proper for entering upon this subject should be enquired, we are ready to answer, that religion should be practised and not questioned, till the middle season of life, till the most vigorous period of manhood arrives. We assert, that this mighty subject cannot be sufficiently examined, till half the life of man is run out, till he is elevated upon the summit of the very hill of life, whence his wide prospect shall take in the whole compass of human existence, which reaches from infancy to the grave, and disposes the mind to a serious and sober judgment. To this period of maturity some arrive earlier than others; but some can never arrive to this period—Of these there are thousands; such are the laborious, the unlearned, almost the whole of the softer sex, the young of either sex, and those, above all, whose gross and sensual lives unfit them for any serious or rational judgment, and who may be said never to attain mature and manly understandings.

standings. What have these vast multitudes to do with the writings of infidelity? A handful of the disciplined troops of the enemy slaughter them without resistance, and kill their very souls. Let them flee for protection to the soldiers of Christ, let them embrace with sincerity that cause which is not only the truth of God's holy revelation, but in which they cannot lose; *for godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.* (1 Tim. iv. 8.) Return then to the infidel his insidious presents—his dangerous books, his poisoned arrows, which will wound you in the handling, and rankle in your hearts, ye feeble, and ye unlearned—*Listen not to the voice of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.* The speculative infidel, who conceals his opinions within his own breast, may be an honest though mistaken man; but he, who in the cruel pride of false philosophy seeks for profelytes among the ignorant, wishes only to triumph in your weakness, and to glory in your shame. The infidel who addresses his deadly sophistry to a woman aims at the sure destruction of her body, as well as her soul. Alas! the instances are without number! The woman who is once beguiled of her faith, is soon beguiled of all else which is prized by a virtuous woman; of all that forms the glory and the honour of her sex. For of all this religion is the genuine excellence and the sure protection,

One portion of my subject yet remains, it is that in which I proposed to speak of books, which treat of manners. Under this head, lest I should too far trespass on your patience, I shall confine my observations to a small portion of the works of mere imagination, to which I entreat, particularly, the attention of the younger part of my congregation. In those fictions, which describe the characters and circumstances of common life, some instruction and much delight I am ready to acknowledge may be found; and in some, above all others, which are produced by the pen of genius, and which flow from the generous source of the well informed mind. A cheerful story may innocently and even profitably beguile the leisure hours; and a well told tale of imaginary woe sweetly disposes the heart, yet unexperienced in the sad vicissitudes of life, to sympathize with and to relieve real misery. So far, nothing evil is to be apprehended from those agreeable fictions. But having granted thus much, it is incumbent on us to point out the danger which may attend them. The principal danger arises in this, as in all other things, from excess. The ardent imaginations of youth are not easily restrained to a moderate and safe indulgence in any thing. Having once been delighted with works of fiction, they relish no others; they read with avidity, or rather devour books of this kind, neglecting, nay even abhorring all writing of more solid and instructive nature.

ture. The injurious consequences are great and numerous. The vigour of the mind is debilitated, and the season of youth, in which treasures of useful knowledge should have been stored up by arduous exertions, is wasted away in idle dreams, in fantastic scenes, in a world of fairy visions, altogether useless for any good purpose. When the inordinate appetite for this reading prevails, the valuable works of imagination are not alone selected, but all are swallowed; and as the weak and absurd very much exceed in number, so must the impressions left on the youthful mind most probably be those of weakness and absurdity. The judgment is led astray on every subject, false ideas of life are entertained, the brain is filled with scenes and adventures, with plots and catastrophes, false principles of action are adopted, and a tinsel of sentiment, or a flash of honour supercedes the solid and patient virtues, and the sense of religion. Young women perhaps, whose imaginations are more susceptible of fanciful impressions, are most subject to these dangers. Hence arises wrong objects of pursuit in life; and in that connexion, which even according to their own principles decides their fate, discontent and disappointment prevail, where every circumstance might have been improved into reasonable enjoyment and happiness. And young men, by devoting themselves too eagerly to these trifling writings, are unfitted for severer studies, and will not easily recover

ver the precious time, which they may be seduced to waste in those paths of flowery folly.

Why can I not close here the admonitions I think it my duty to give to young persons, concerning the disadvantages arising from the excessive study of works of imagination? Alas! I cannot—those are, comparatively, but trifling disadvantages from trifling studies. There is a class of works of imagination of a stamp more dangerous to the welfare of society, than any books I have yet mentioned. On political subjects, false principles are exposed by a thousand able writings. Religion also has her appointed champions, who combat every form of error, and who are chosen to defend the truth. But what restraint is opposed to the writings of the depraved and prurient imagination, which are seen only in the secrecy of retirement, which enflame the youthful passions, and corrupt the heart? It would appear, indeed, that the law allows not such publications; and it is most certain religion condemns them. *Cease my son, says the wise King, to hear the instruction that causeth to err.* (Prov. xix. 27.) St. Paul's instructions are found in the fifth chapter of the Ephesians, of which these words are a part:—*Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children—But fornication and all uncleanness, let it not be once named amongst you as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient, but rather giving of thanks. For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person hath any inheritance*

ance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them, and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret. The apostle speaks indeed of corrupt words and actions. The corruption of writing generated and multiplied from the prolific engine, the press, so as to disseminate poison in every direction over the whole earth, was an art yet unknown in the days of the apostle. But from this foul source, every sin, against which he warns us so dreadfully, is secretly imbibed to pollute the heart. How has it then come to pass, that this dire fountain of evil has not been more exposed from this place of instruction by the ministers of religion? We answer in the words of the apostle already quoted—*Because it is a shame to speak of the things which are done (we will say of the books which are read) of them in secret.* The evil is known, and its danger is known: and yet no man ventures to correct it: we are ashamed to reprove the evil we know. It rankles like a foul and consuming ulcer in the constitution, which we blush to disclose to the physician himself, till it eats into the very vitals, and corrupts the very springs of life. The law cannot lay hold on those criminal writings, so as to punish the authors or the venders. If religion see,

the

she winks her eyes in pain, and only gives general and rare *insinuations* of admonition. And what is the consequence? The evil increases under a sort of negative encouragement. Our youth are corrupted in the very season of instruction, and the hope and expectations of their blossoming years are devoured by a secret canker worm, and fall off fruitless. Learning, the ornament and delight of the mind, the glory of prosperity, the refuge in adversity; learning, the sure introduction to wisdom, to science, and to immortal religion; learning, which elevates the cultivated mind to a soaring flight towards heaven, far beyond the sight of ignorance; learning, the blessing and the gift of God to men; the first rudiments of divine learning itself are perverted by those foul writings into the heaviest curse. And whilst the happy father rejoices in the fair prospect of a rich and luxuriant crop, the produce of the good seed he has sown, and of the care with which he hath cultivated the talents of his beloved son—an *enemy, a secret and malignant enemy, has sown tares*, which shall choke and destroy his just expectations.

How then shall we estimate the fatal effects of those vile productions, which address themselves to the grosser passions; which, meeting a spark of human frailty in the breast, foment it into a devouring flame. Those vile productions, which, under the alluring garb of knowledge, instil secret poison through the eye: which promise to fatal
curiosity

curiosity, that *its eyes shall be opened, and that it shall be as a God*, by the knowledge of evil. How shall we, in terms of just abhorrence, describe the evil which is wrought when the serpent, under the form of forbidden knowledge, again tempts the innocent daughter of Eve ; when he lurks beneath her pillow ; when he again “ flushes her cheek with unquiet rest ;” when he first tempts her to dissemble, who never before dissembled ; when she hides herself, and is ashamed of even her earthly father, who before never hid herself, or was ashamed ? Our first parents, when innocent, knew not fear or shame ; their first sin made them experience the pangs of both ; and we, their posterity, are subject to the same sensations, from the same cause.

Forgive my honest zeal, if I have alarmed the feelings of any conscious breast in this congregation. Too easy of access, too prolific in its fatal fruit, is the dangerous tree of knowledge of evil, to allow us to behold many examples, even among the softer sex, of a reserve so perfect as would have exempted them from the transgression of our first parents. The dangerous temptations abound ; the vile books swarm on every shelf, and in every form and language ; embalmed in the immortal language of classic Rome, they disgrace the libraries of the learned ; adorned with all the levity and colloquial grace of France, they abound in the collections of the courtly and the fashionable ; and,

if other books be amassed for shew, these are purchased for use. No opprobrious dust obscures these volumes; they alone are read and studied, along with a few pages of foreign philosophy.— And hence follows the corruption of the manners of the higher classes, the violation of every sacred engagement, the mutual pollution of the marriage bed. Hence follows a system of refined and fatal immorality; for (as I am informed from certain authority) books of this sort are purchased as the sure instruments of seduction; and unprincipled villainy, with such books, performs the part of the arch-enemy of man. Those vile writings are certain gain to the venders; they are bought up with avidity on the instant they are exposed to sale, and, were thousands more to be imported from the same corrupted country, thousands more would be wanting to supply the increasing and enormous demand. But not to the foreign press alone is immorality and vile writing confined; our own presses have propagated and transfused the foreign poison through the veins of our abandoned youth. Nor are there wanting native productions suited to the various taste of various depravity; from the most accomplished and refined compositions, down to the most gross and contemptible writing of ignorant barbarism. And in this depraved literature is mispent much of the precious time of too many of our youth. God forbid I should say all are thus perverted in their studies, and that the know-
M ledge,

ledge, even of the first elements of letters, proved thus a curse to all. No, I am persuaded that our happy island can still boast of many ingenuous and worthy young men, whose studies are destined hereafter to do themselves honour, and to be the glory of their country, and whose principles are fixed upon a foundation not to be shaken by irreligious or sensual writings. Their pestilential influence has not spread amongst us, as yet, to any wide extent. The better hopes, therefore, have we of arresting its dangerous progress. If then, at this moment, any ingenuous youth happily hear me; if any men of sound mind be present, who enter into my feelings on these subjects; I conjure them, as they value their immortal souls, as they value the purity and honour of their families, as they hope for the blessings of heaven upon their country, and that God, with his uplifted arm, shall confound our enemies, and scatter those who delight in war, that they exert all their influence to stop the progress of irreligion and immorality in the land; lest the just vengeance of heaven should involve us in the calamities of that most profligate nation, which has deluged our country with desperate philosophy, and with foul and fatal immorality, from its polluted press.

But, above all, let me interest, in the great cause of religion and purity, that sex which is on earth the genuine temple, and the chosen residence of both. If religion and purity were

banished from the sacred asylum of the female bosom, whither, alas! would they fly for shelter?—Men would become atrocious savages, and trample on every law, divine and human. Must we again, alas! turn your eyes for a sad example to that desperate people, whose females have abandoned all the mild virtues of their sex, and sacrificed religion and purity to masculine wickedness? I call then upon you, ye weak and tender sex, to know and vindicate your strength and power. I call upon you to consider, that your country and your God require of you mighty and solemn duties, which you may not trifle with, at the peril of all you hold dear, God's blessings in this world, and a crown of immortality in the next. Be not deceived into a vain indolence, or suppose that you, the better half of the human race, are born only to serve and obey the tyranny of the other. You have each your mutual duties: to men belong the vigorous, the firm, the active pursuits of life; the deep researches, the vast speculations which enlarge the capacity of human nature, and the bounds of knowledge. To women belong the refinements of life, the excellence of every social, and of every christian virtue. To their delicate perceptions, and wakeful vigilance, is committed all that exists on earth of purity and genuine religion. And the softer sex, invested with the majesty of innocence, and clad in the armour of faith, direct the willing obedience of the haughty

sons of men. To men may belong the vigorous investigation of the truth ; but women give it the proof, by the excellence of practice. The labour of men may clear and establish the evidences of our holy religion ; but the true spirit of the Gospel is seen to live in the mild virtues, and in the irreproachable conduct of the other sex ; and observe, that men neglect their bounden duty of public worship of God, and the churches are forsaken, except those which women are known to frequent.—Ye soft and powerful sex, forget not your duty, or, with criminal indolence, bury the talents God has committed to your care. Assert the dignity of your situation in the scale of human life ; know your own influence, and apply it to its grand and proper objects. It is yours to make men practice what virtue and wisdom approve ; it is yours to guard the rarest, and the most precious treasures of life, innocence and purity ; it is yours to raise the drooping countenance of modesty ; it is yours to awe, by your high authority, the audaciousness of vice, and to arrest the progress of impurity. Keep your eyes fixed upon the true and exalted character of female excellence : you behold how it consists in steady virtue, in unspotted purity, in religion of the heart, in true piety, and in fervent and christian charity ; so shall you preserve the just reputation of the sex of this happy island ; so shall you stop the evil which begins to invade us from foreign shores ; so shall

loose

loose morals and vile books retire to their congenial darkness, nor dare to pollute the ears or the eyes of our hopeful youth; so shall God's blessing guard our peaceful habitations from the world in arms; and so shall we finally, through our Lord Jesus Christ, be all admitted into his sight, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

loose morals and vice looks twice to their con-
sistent witness, not dare to pollute the cars or
the eyes of our hopeful youth; to shall God's
lifting guard our present temptations from the
work in arms, and to that we finally, through our
Lord Jesus Christ, be all admitted into his light.
who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.

SERMON VIII.

PHILIPPIANS III. 8.

“ YEA, DOUBTLESS, AND I COUNT ALL THINGS

“ BUT LOSS, FOR THE EXCELLENCY OF THE

“ KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST JESUS MY LORD.”

OF all the acquisitions, which man can obtain during his short residence in this life, the most valuable are the knowledge and the sure hope of everlasting life. In other acquisitions we have only a temporary interest; in the knowledge and hope of our salvation our interest is eternal, and cannot be wrested from us by death itself, which strips us of all other things. Every sincere Christian will therefore heartily join in the words of the apostle, and *doubtless count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.*

But the world is at variance with the truths of the Gospel. Mammon fastens upon the hearts of men, and then they cannot serve God. The world teaches to hold in the highest estimation the things of the world, and not *the excellency of the knowledge of Christ our Lord.* The man of

this world pays little regard to the things which belong chiefly to another: religion never obtains his near and serious attention; he looks upon it as an affair in which his concern is distant and uncertain; he looks upon it as an intrusion upon his more immediate and material concerns---the business, the pursuits, the pleasures of life. He sees the business, the pursuits, and the pleasures of life carried on without religion, and therefore he does not think of religion. And the sure inheritance of eternal life is rashly slighted by the man, who would dispute to his last hour the most doubtful title to any of the frail and perishable possessions of this transitory world.

Among men of this description are to be found the most determined infidels, and men of the most irregular lives; but it must be also acknowledged and lamented, that many valuable members of society are also involved among such men; for the snares of the world entangle and perplex them, and beguile them of their eternal hopes. We shall confine our observations to these only, and endeavour to point out the principal sources of their error. It may be comprised almost in these few words.---The world has entwined itself about their hearts, and they think religion unnecessary; considering it merely as a rule, by which it is intended that men should govern themselves with regard to society; and erroneously supposing, that they can devise for themselves sufficient rules
of

of conduct, independant of the Gospel. The rules which seem in their eyes to supersede religion, and which are set up in opposition to the Gospel, are---the *laws of the land*, and the *laws of morality*; to which are often added certain laws called the *laws of honour*. I shall speak chiefly of the two latter; and it shall be my business in this discourse to examine their effects upon men, in comparison with the effects arising from a just observance of the laws of the Gospel. And, I trust, our conclusion will be in the words of the apostle---*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.*

The excellence of any rule of conduct will readily be allowed to consist in the possibility of *comprehensive application*---in its *necessity*, and in its *effects*. The laws of the Gospel are eminently distinguished above all other rules of conduct in these requisite marks of perfection.

The christian religion supplies a system of morals the most perfect, upon principles the simplest and most intelligible even to the meanest capacity, so as to embrace completely, within the influence of its regulations, every department of human life, and every period of human existence. In the Gospel, the prosperous and the unfortunate, the great and the humble, the monarch and the slave, find equal advantage and instruction: its perfect precepts correct at the same time the
haughtiness

haughtiness of prosperity, whilst they reach with their blessed consolations the deepest abyss of human misery. The laws of the Gospel furnish rules by which not only eternal happiness may be obtained, but even the only safe and secure instructions for mens conduct in this life, so as to procure the most perfect happiness of which it is capable. For it is worthy of observation, that the truest happiness of even this mortal life cannot be obtained in *the lusts of the flesh, in the lust of the eye, or in the pride of life*, (1 John, ii. 16.) but is alone to be found in conscious virtue, in a just sense of God's providential care, and, above all, in the Christian's hopes of eternal life. The immortal soul of man aspires after something above the gross indulgence of sensual desires, and above the toys of ambition, and all the transient pageantry of the world. The immortal soul cannot find on the turbulent ocean of this world any sure stay, except in the anchor of its hope and salvation.

Morality, and law, and honour may boast of their functions, independant of religion. Morality may find its support in the beauty of virtue, in the deformity of vice, and in the benefits which result to society from the just cultivation of its rules; and these considerations may influence men of wisdom and of speculation. The laws of honour may influence men for the sake of their own dignity, for their rank, and the sense of what is due

due to them in society. The laws of the land may be considered sufficient to restrain the vulgar and ignorant mind.

But these are short and feeble sanctions, in comparison of those which sustain the Gospel. This is complicated and laboured machinery, liable to a thousand derangements, and to a thousand interruptions, in comparison with the simple application and lasting influence of the laws of God. How frail and feeble is the beauty of virtue in comparison with the sense of religion, which reaches at once the wise and the ignorant! How contemptible and mean is the sense of dignity arising from the little accidents of life, beside that genuine dignity which we derive from religion! when we believe that God hath created man in his own image, and that he destines him to eternal glory.---When a man feels himself invested with this high rank and honour, he regulates his actions as becomes the most exalted being of God's visible creation, and directs his conduct, not to obtain the mere applause of men, but to secure the approbation of his God.---And soaring above the little, the mean, and the complicated interests of this world, which confound and seduce even the wise and the worthy, he not only watches his actions but sanctifies his motives; he not only cleans his hands but he purifies his heart: his holy religion guards him against injuring others, by filling his heart with benevolent affections

affections towards all mankind ; and teaches him a system of charity and of justice, not only useful to society now, but such as is calculated to benefit mankind to eternity—such as reaches to the world to come ; wherein the pious Christian shall enjoy the blessed communion of those saints made perfect, to whom he has been perhaps himself the humble instrument of pointing out the way of salvation.

If it were possible for human nature to become perfect, the good Christian would be a perfect man : and that great advances towards perfection may be made under the Gospel, we could prove in numerous instances from history, and even from our own experience : for, even in these days of irreligion and general decay of piety, is there any one, nay I trust there is not any, who cannot bear testimony to the christian virtues of a number of their fellow-citizens and of their dearest friends ? How many do we not all know about us, among us (or who have been lately among us, but are gone now to meet their eternal reward), whose conduct has been the shining light to their brethren and fellow-citizens ! Have you not observed them humble in prosperity ; patient in adversity ; kind masters ; indulgent to the frailties of others ; careful in correcting their own ; good fathers ; faithful husbands ; pious children ? Let us look also on the softer sex : do we not all of us know among them christian mothers ; respectable matrons ;

trons ; virgins, in simplicity and purity like the *harmless dove*---in wisdom like the prudent *serpent* ?

Such are the characters which are the genuine fruit of the Gospel. But even where the christian character is not ripened into perfection, the very occasional influence of our religion is often productive of the most obvious and excellent effects. Recollect each for yourselves ; whose passion has not the authority of the Gospel at some time happily restrained ? Which of you has not at some time received the grace of God, and not in vain ? When evil thoughts have assaulted your hearts ; when dangerous opportunities, when subtle temptations have been spread before your feet ; when, on those occasions, you listened to the voice of your conscience, and conducted yourselves by the laws of religion and of God, did you repent ? Did you not rejoice ? Have you not at some time each prayed to God in your distress, and hath he not heard and delivered you from danger, from evils, from sickness, from death ? If your prayer at some time have not been directly granted, can you conceive that it was not heard, when the blessings you now enjoy are most probably the consequence, though not by the way you asked ? But how much more wisely, however darkly to you, hath God conducted you under his providential care to unexpected blessings, and to light out of darkness ! If even some appear
to

to have been altogether disappointed in their heart's desires, are they abandoned without consolation? Hath not their religion, the christian religion, mighty consolation wherewith to support them?—*in that their light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh to them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: (2 Cor. iv. 17.)*

We might with perfect safety terminate our enquiries on this subject in the contemplation of this excellency of our knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord; or we might most profitably extend our observations to many more of the admirable effects it has upon our lives, and the superior elevation it gives our hopes. But we shall for the present satisfy ourselves with these few and imperfect suggestions: especially, as the consideration of any other rule of conduct must set the excellence of the christian religion in even a stronger light: and we have mentioned another rule which is sometimes considered distinct from religion, that is, *morality*.

Morality, considered independent of religion, is that rule of conduct which men derive solely from their own reason. It has been justly observed by some of our ablest divines, that the most perfect systems of morality are those which have been formed since the knowledge of the Gospel; and that they are all derived from that purest source of morality, however ungratefully pretending to be independant of it.

From

From what source their morality is derived, who set it up as a rule of life superseding the Gospel, I do not enquire; neither do I object to its general utility, as a system of conduct; I shall speak only of its insufficiency without the aid of the Gospel.

Amongst men of worth there are many to be found who, not having directed their attention sufficiently to the excellence of the christian religion, nor having duly considered the necessity of religion, have thought it enough that they govern themselves by the rules of morality: but morality, which is essentially connected with true religion, should by no means be separated from it; for if it be, it fails in many and material requisites as a perfect rule for man. The principal deficiencies in this respect of the most perfect system of morality, unsupported by religion, seem to arise—*first*, from its want of authority; and *secondly*, from its incapability of extent and application to the various circumstances of human life. If the most general system of morality be deficient in those essential qualities, it is but little aided as to them by an auxiliary which it frequently obtains, *honour*. We have mentioned *honour* as sometimes adopted as a principle of conduct; if not in strict alliance with morality, it is miserably short indeed as a perfect rule. The union, however, of morality and honour being sometimes supposed sufficient to supersede and render religion unnecessary, I shall consider

sider them united, and examine them as to their authority, extent, and influence; and point out their insufficiency when unsupported by religion.

When the well-disposed and virtuous mind submits itself to the government of morality and honour, and adopts them as the principles of its actions, the effect is so fair and amiable, that, on the first view, we are apt to acknowledge their sufficiency, and to say, what could religion do more for such a man? Prosperity surrounds him; peace fills his breast; the love of mankind, and a *good name, which is better than riches*, are his reward. We find his actions and conduct as correct, and his sentiments as noble, as theirs who think most deeply on religion; perhaps he excells them even in charity, in benevolence, and temperance—the virtues of that very Gospel which he does not cultivate, but which he is too delicate to insult. In all the extent of society there is not a character which so much injures the credit of the Gospel: morality and honour, which can form such a man, seem to supersede religion; and if in any case religion may be superseded, religion will be suspected not to be necessary.

Before we decide, we should examine. And let us suppose a possible case—that such a man's neglect of religion may be the consequence of the accidents of his birth and education: that he might have been the son of a profligate father, whose infidelity alone, of his many vices, had been entailed

tailed on his son. Other vices, we know, often shock the ingenuous and young mind. Let us imagine, then, that he had early seen and abhorred his father's intemperance, his extravagance, his dishonesty, and, from the first opening of his vigorous and just understanding, had determined to form to himself another character. But that of his infidelity he had not learned to disapprove, more than the indecency of insulting the religion of his country, which he might also have determined to avoid. If such a case be possible, how should we look for genuine religion in such a man? —The principles of religion, alas! if not early planted and watered, and cultivated by the skilful and prudent hand of a pious parent, are not likely to grow spontaneously: even after every cultivation, the tares and rank weeds, the indigenous growth of a bad world, are apt to overspread and choke the good seed of life. No! the world, the polite world, the sunshine of the court, the tumult of the camp, or the business of the city, are not the schools to teach religion. Religion must be nurtured tenderly, under the shade of peaceful, domestic retirement, if we would have the lovely and aspiring plant to thrive and gather strength, to fling his branches towards the heavens, to scatter round the fragrance of his blossoms, and to ripen with the fruits of eternal life.

An insensibility to religion is, perhaps, the only defect in such a fair character; and it may be ac-

N

counted

counted for in a thousand ways, which God grant may prove his excuse at the last solemn day.—Nay, such is the goodness of heaven, that the punishment for such frailty is perhaps often, and totally, here. Let us consider in what manner this punishment may be inflicted. We see such a man only, in the most favourable point of view, prosperous, happy. Yes, but however ready to suffer ourselves to be deceived by appearances, let us ask again—is he happy? And what is the amount of his supposed happiness? Are there to him no moments of dejection and despondence?—and is he alone exempt from human infirmity?—Does he never think on death?—and can he feel comfort at the darkness and doubt which, to him, spread beyond the grave?—Is it not a punishment to him to be cut off from the Christian's hope of a blessed resurrection?—He is happy now.—How long will his happiness last?—O transitory and vain enjoyments, may not sickness and infirmity interrupt them?—Is not old age creeping fast upon him, with all its evils and bitterness?—Though he die not now, must he not survive his friends?—Is not his heart formed for friendship?—And what shall minister consolation to him, what hope shall cheer him?—Is he never to hope to meet again?—Alas! no.—His hopes are extinguished by death. Profound, indeed, is the night of affliction, which thus robs a good man of his only consolation on those occasions; which call in vain

for relief, except to the cheering hopes of religion; and on occasions, from which the condition of no human being is exempted. Whither shall the mind fly in affliction, in calamity, in sickness, but to the tender mercies of God?—What have morality and honour to offer here?—Alas! nothing. Morality and honour beautifully adorn prosperity and days of joy; but religion is necessary to provide for the inevitable vicissitudes of human life; and deeply is he punished, who, neglecting to cultivate and establish the hopes of the Gospel, is deprived of their consolation; the only one which can afford relief to the most intolerable anguish human nature can sustain. How great, therefore, must the power of religion be, whose balm is efficacious, where all other medicine fails?—*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord.*

A person of the character I have just now described is supposed to be free from the common temptations to wrong and evil, on account of the easy situation of his fortune. But, if we imagine morality and honour to be the sole principles of action for the mass of mankind, we hardly require a moment to be convinced of their inefficacy for any good purpose. So many temptations occur from their various methods of obtaining the means of life, that little opposition is made to the most flagrant dishonesty, by their morality or honour.—If religion, and the fear of God, do not compel

them to be just in their dealings; the fear of violating any other principles will be weak indeed. The mass of mankind learn their principles from authority, not from reasoning; and what authority can influence them, if they reject the authority of God? It may be said the authority of the laws. Human laws reach but a short way, and are easily evaded; they curb not the evil contrivance of the heart, nor can be formed so as to apply to the multiplicity of cases that occur. Religion alone goes deep enough for this purpose. And accordingly we find, that the surest hope of the honesty, industry, and obedience to the laws of a people, must be derived from a just veneration for the truths of religion, and from the fear of God. In vain shall morality reason; the people are not used to reason: in vain shall honour stimulate; the nerves of the people are blunt to such delicate impressions: nay, in vain shall the laws of the land be written in blood, unless the laws of God are first written on the people's hearts.

Morality and honour serve then only within a very narrow compass; they adorn prosperity, and serve for general conduct in the ordinary affairs of human life: their influence, if any among the lower orders of men, is altogether trifling; they are deficient in that authority which is necessary to govern them; their influence, in the middle ranks of life, as far as they go, is good, but their extent is confined. So long as it appears to be a man's
interest

interest to be honest, he will continue so, even if he have no respect to religion, neither *have God in all his thoughts*. But throw in his way strong temptation, and the assurance of escaping detection, and then trust in his hands your life, your property, your dearest interests. Would you call in to your sick-bed the physician, your next heir, who you know has no fear of God, or hopes of hereafter? You must have sufficient confidence in his honour, if you expect him to make mighty exertions to save your life. I will not suggest that he might be guilty of a crime against which human nature recoils, when I suppose he is persuaded that no witness can discover him. I trust such criminality, although possible, is as rare as it would be monstrous; but I would confide my life, on the bed of sickness, to the skill even of my enemy, were he also my nearest heir, and were I persuaded that he believed, *that the eyes of the Lord are in every place beholding the evil and the good*; and that the guilty, however they may deceive men, can never escape his eternal justice.

Commit your property into the hands of the man of law, what shall engage him to act towards you with fidelity and strict justice? Will you trust his morality and his honour; and are you careless about his religion? You are imprudent; because, you are safe in his hands only so long as his interests coincide with his morality and honour. But will they preserve to you your property, upon a

favourable occasion, when witnesses are absent, (all except Him whose eye never winks), and, when he is stimulated to plunder you at once by his avarice, and by his necessities? If you escape under such circumstances, you are more fortunate than thousands, who deplore, in ruin, their misplaced confidence, who trusted to honour instead of religion, and are stripped by legal and rapacious villany.

Will you appoint honour and morality, and lettered law, as the guardians of your orphan child, and not look for religion to assist in the solemn trust? When the heavy hand of death is now upon you, and when the tyrant compels you to commit, into other protection, the darling of your heart, and the hardly accumulated treasures you have stored up for his support and advancement in life.

Will you, when you are called far away to the field of glory, to combat the foes of your country—will you, when you are compelled to go to another kingdom to recover your property—will you, when you pursue on distant seas, and in unknown lands, the labours of commerce, will you think lightly of religion, and make over to the guardianship of honour and morality alone, the persons of your beautiful daughter, or of your beloved wife? Are the strong restraints of religion to be removed, and the furious passions to be
curbed,

curbed, only by the impotent and unavailing opposition of those feeble and treacherous protectors? Better far you should leave your body on the field of glory; better far you should die in a strange land, unsuccessful, in your suit; better you should fall by the hand of fell savages, on distant and inhospitable shores, than return again to see your sorrow and disgrace; than return crowned with glory, than return possessed of property, than return enriched with commerce. Your wife is no more for you; she has fled with her seducer, and you are dishonoured. Where will you seek your lovely daughter; she is polluted and abandoned; she haunts the vile and loathsome houses of sin; she parades, in open disgrace, the public streets: she is no longer now ashamed of men; she feels no shame or fear, except of you: the thought of you has undergone a dire change in her breast; instead of filial tenderness it shakes her with horror. But, if she shock you not by a sudden encounter in the public streets; if she have had time to come to herself, and your paternal bosom still beats for the poor prodigal—O! turn in here, turn into this house of repentance, which christian charity hath opened for her, and behold how heavenly religion is employed in repairing the vessel which false principles had nearly foundered; behold how religion is labouring at the fair wreck, and refitting it to steer to a port of eternal peace!

Yes, ye poor prodigals; ye who were *dead and are alive again, and were lost and are found—* (Luke xv. 32.) You have learned by your own sad experience, the effects of what is called morality and honour, when separated from religion. You have discovered the true value of the pompous declamation, and the specious reasonings of men, when weighed alone against their vehement passions; you have found them *lighter than vanity itself*; hollow and fallacious, like *the sounding brass and the tinkling cymbal*. When you listened to the promises, and reposed upon the honour of the crafty seducer, who beguiled our innocence, like the serpent of old; how sufficient, how liberal did that honour of his appear, and how much a nobler security for you to rely upon, than the dull bonds of religious obligation! Alas! how could fond love, and innocence, and inexperience, reason otherwise? The delusion was short, but it proved nearly fatal. You know what ruin fell upon you, and how the *snare of death encompassed you on every side*. And what has rescued you from utter destruction? Religion. Religion, with all its kind charities, hath snatched you up, and placed you here. Blessed religion hath restored you to almost all that false honour had robbed you of. To a second innocence, if not in the eyes of the world, at least in the sight of God, to pardon for your manifold sins, to hope in his promises, to
his

his peace, which passeth all understanding, and to the whole excellency of the *knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.*

If we would curb, within just bounds, the violence of men's passions, which otherwise break out, like devouring flames, upon society, let us never remove the most powerful safeguard and restraint of religion. Nay, if we wish to secure to ourselves all, and the best that can be obtained of comfort, under the various calamities and vicissitudes of human life; if we desire to live wisely, and to understand our present state; if we would enjoy rationally the portion of happiness which may be our lot, let us never abandon our love of God, and of Christ Jesus our Lord: let us hold fast the profession of our faith, and his Gospel, as the sure anchor of our salvation.

To form the most perfect character in human nature, let morality and honour be adopted as the principles of common life and conduct towards each other; but, let religion be the deep principle of the heart; let it be the light which shineth in darkness; to its laws let every secret thought be referred, in every difficulty, and in every temptation; and, on its blessed hopes, above all, let us repose and rest. Religion suiteth every season, and every complexion of life; it is universal in its application,
it

it is powerful in its authority, tremendous in its threatnings, glorious in its promises. *Yea, doubtless, therefore, and let us count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.*

SERMON IX.

Preached at MONKSTOWN, Aug. 10. 1794, for the Benefit
of the CHARITY SCHOOL.

[The Parish School of Monckstown, in the vicinity of Dublin, was founded and established under the wisest regulations, principally by William Digges La Touche, Esq. a name well known abroad, and at home, in the annals of charity.]

MATT. xxiv. 45. 46.

“ WHO THEN IS A FAITHFUL AND WISE SER-
“ VANT, WHOM HIS LORD HATH MADE
“ RULER OVER HIS HOUSEHOLD, TO GIVE
“ THEM MEAT IN DUE SEASON?
“ BLESSED IS THAT SERVANT, WHOM HIS
“ LORD, WHEN HE COMETH, SHALL FIND
“ SO DOING.”

THE christian religion alone has opened men's eyes on their true estate, and taught them the just value of their possessions. The Gospel informs us, that we are accountable creatures, and that we shall answer to God for the application of our time and abilities, according to the measure of each, which he has committed to our disposal. The necessary inequality which subsists among the various orders of men in society, by which some are placed far above others in talents, power, and riches,

riches, is so represented in the Gospel, that such distinctions on the one hand, cease to be invidious; and on the other, to prove incentives of pride. This inequality will quickly be done away in another life; and in this it is spoken of as only necessary to the regulation of the families of the earth, over which there is one lord and master, who calleth us all brethren and fellow servants, though he hath appointed some as stewards and superior servants to preside over and regulate his household in his absence. The Lord is represented as dividing to his servants, to some five talents, and to some two, and to others only entrusting one. But from all he requires an account in proportion to their abilities. *The faithful and wise servant whom he has made ruler over his household, and who giveth them meat in due season, shall indeed be blessed. But if his reward be great for doing his duty, so shall also his punishment be great for neglect. If that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Matt. xxiv.)

In the punishment threatened in this strong allegory are they involved, who, being placed in those circumstances in life, wherein they have the power
of

of doing good to their neighbour, neglect the happy opportunity, and selfishly pursue only their own pleasure, or their own mean temporal advantage. For men have, indeed, no property in the things of this world, they are, even without a figure, only the stewards and dispensers of them; however allowed a reasonable and moderate use in them whilst they are passing through their hands. We have, in truth, only the administration of God's blessings which we can call our own, the possession is so fluctuating, that we may be deprived of it by a thousand accidents; and so short, that even if we hold it to the last hour of life, it is, as it were, but momentary: and we carry nothing thereof away. The administration is alone of consequence, for that will be remembered to us, and for that we shall be made strictly to answer in an estate which is unchangeable.

It is therefore our wisdom to exert ourselves in that service, wherein God hath placed us. And whether he have bestowed upon us the use of riches, talents, or power, to apply them principally to the benefit of his household. It is our duty to open our hands and impart freely a portion of the blessings we possess, to those who stand in need; and to exercise ourselves strenuously during our short residence here, in those works of charity and mercy, which are twice blessed even in this life.

And indeed the very nature of human possessions bears upon them the stamp and signature of
this

this divine law. *That they are given to be communicated.* For their true enjoyment depends alone on their communication. Since whatever selfishness would withhold from others, or grasp for its sole indulgence to itself, is found to change from a pleasure and a blessing into a pain and a curse. We cannot imagine either the solitary power of the despot, or the solitary hoards of the miser, to afford any true enjoyment; much the contrary. The power of the one, and the riches of the other, are causes of suspicion, anxiety, and even of discontent: Consequences very different from the happiness they hoped to find in their acquisition of them. And the law of communication is universal, for it extends to all human possessions and talents, even to those which seem most appropriate to private advantage. Wisdom and virtue themselves seem to lose their brightest characters, if secluded or not liberally communicated. *Your candle is not to be hid under a bushel, but it is to be set on a candlestick, that it may enlighten the whole house. Your light is to shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matt. v. 16.) You are to do good, and to provoke one another to love and to do good works. (Heb. x. 24.) And whatever gift you have received, you are to minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. (1 Pet. iv. 10) Freely ye have received, freely give. (Matt. x. 8.) Your knowledge and your virtues are to be communicated*

cated for instruction and example. Your benevolence and your charity are the true confession of your faith in Christ, by which *all men shall know that you are his disciples*, and aspire to imitate your good example. Your light in the communication loses nothing, it is preserved, and multiplied: and it humbly imitates the perfection of that divine light, which not confining itself to the enjoyment of its own essence, hath, in such various excellence, displayed itself throughout the whole creation.

It is very remarkable concerning those external blessings which God hath distributed amongst men, and which he requires to be communicated, that any opposition to his will in this respect, not only brings punishment upon the selfish man, but is vain and abortive in itself. God's blessings to mankind ever prove such in despite of the selfish, who defeats their ends only with regard to himself. This is particularly evident in the abuse of wealth; the sinner may, in various ways, render himself on this account obnoxious to the divine displeasure; but still unworthy, though he may be, he cannot utterly destroy the effect of the blessing abused, or extend the injury much beyond his own person. If he lavish and squander away his riches in vain or even criminal pursuits, without a thought of doing good, or any thought beyond his selfish enjoyment: the enjoyment he seeks for himself he will most certainly miss; and the good, which
he

he intended not, he will inadvertently, and unthanked, provide for others. He will thus himself suffer for his folly, and have to answer hereafter for evil stewardship. But still that wealth of which he was unworthy, and which he has dissipated sinfully, flows into other channels, and, regaining its true nature in its course, becomes God's blessing upon the hands of honest industry. If avarice hoard up and deny to himself, as well as to his neighbour, the use of his riches as a blessing; the wretch can stop the benefit of their circulation but for a moment, his soul is soon required of him, and then he leaves all behind to be dispersed, or to be worthily enjoyed by those who succeed to his inheritance. Thus the nature of God's blessings is not to be altered, except at the peril of him who abuses them. In every good thing, which a man possesses, his neighbour claims a portion; and, if he would enjoy, he must impart. Knowledge the more communicated grows the more abundant: and riches flow back by a thousand imperceptible channels to bless the charitable man. *For he that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and look what he layeth out, it shall be paid him again.* (Prov. xix. 17.) Yes, even here, for God's especial blessings follow the exercise of charity even in this life. The good opinion of our neighbours is its immediate fruit: and how much doth all our prosperity hang upon opinion? *A good name is not only better than riches,* (Prov. xxii. 1.) but it is even the surest

surest riches. Unexpected credit and unknown friends, are the sure resources of charitable commerce. His wealth is a fountain of living waters, which, although it send forth incessantly an abundant stream, apparently enough to exhaust it, continues still full and sweet; supplied by a thousand unseen and secret springs. Selfishness is a pond of foul and stagnant waters, which, though confined and untouched by men, the air drinks up, and the sun evaporates; leaving it exposed a dry and deformed waste.

But it is not industrious commerce alone which profits by the good opinion of men. They who seem most wealthy and independent, find returns more than equal to their charity from the meanest of their dependants, and even obtain homage from the worst of men. The care and economy of faithful servants return tenfold into the bosom of the rich and charitable man; labour for him performs his just task with cheerfulness. Plunder and Treachery abstain from his waving harvests, his collected granaries, and his teeming flocks: Violence and Robbery respect his venerable mansion, spare his happy slumbers, and abstain from his sacred person. And the *destroying angel*, sent forth by the Lord to *cut off the first born* of the hard-hearted Egyptian, shall *pass over that door*, which is distinguished by the holy sacrifice of charity. Such are the duties we owe to each other in society; such is the obligation of charity on the professors of the

Gospel, and such even in this life are its blessed effects to those who practice this exalted virtue. And in this exalted christian virtue, it is with just exultation that I find my country and my fellow citizens distinguished, perhaps, above all others. *I have therefore, (to use the apostle's words) whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain unto God. (Rom. xv. 17.)* Let it be the pride of other nations to excel in wealth, in commerce, and in the various arts of life. Let it be our glory and our praise to cultivate the benevolent virtues of the Gospel, and to excel the world in blessed charity. Look over and examine the long catalogue of human woes. For which among them has not the indefatigable and tender zeal of charity provided relief? Cast your eye upon the stewards and dispensers of the Lord's blessings upon earth; those great ones whom he hath appointed to the honourable office of ministring to his household, and of binding, in harmonious order, the children of the earth by the influence of their wealth, their power, or their wisdom. How few do you find remiss in their important duty? How many zealous and indefatigable in doing good? How many of either sex appear more ambitious of the title of God's almoner to the poor, than of all other titles. They have parcelled out among them the wide domain of human misery, wherein, besides the general interest of redress and consolation, they have each taken, under their more immediate protection,

tion, some one species of misery to relieve, or some particular good object to accomplish, which most nearly affects their heart. And the labour of love thus divided is carried to perfection. I speak not vainly, this is not the place for vain commendation; for the bare enumeration of the various miseries of mankind, which have found consolation from christian charity, would call to your instant recollection, and almost appear like the naming of so many persons eminently distinguished for good works.

It may be thought an awful transition to turn your attention to the solemn judgment of the last day; but are we not all liable to be cited thither at an instant, for the hour of death is to each the day of judgment. Let us then imagine the sentence of our Saviour and Judge sounding in our ears, might we not hope that it would be pronounced in these blessed words: *Come, ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger and ye took me in: naked and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison and ye came unto me.* (Mat. xxv. 34.) Is there any of these acts of christian mercy, which we know not to have been repeatedly performed, along with many others, not contained in this brief enumeration? Are there not many who hear me conscious of similar obedience to the law of God, and

filled, at this moment, with the lively hope of salvation, through Christ? Yes there are who hear me many, whose liberal offerings God will accept, which he has accepted, and noted down in the book of life; who have stretched forth their bountiful hand in every good work, and have not withheld a just portion of their riches with which God hath blessed, and will bless them: their hearts are now his witness in their breasts. No path of human misery, however sequestered, has been left unexplored by them; youth and age, sickness and health, all the miseries heaven inflicts, or their own sins bring on men, have experienced the benefit of their care and protection. The mind and the body have been the objects of their charitable and christian care. Religion and industry have been the great objects of their cherishing encouragement; nay even pious ingenuity has exercised itself in a new species of commerce, to stimulate useful industry among the poor; new commerce, indeed, where the gain is alone to the industrious poor, and the labour to the wealthy employer.* But are the industrious poor alone the gainers? Is there no reward for

* The plan of Mrs. W. D. La Touche's charity well deserves imitation. She purchased linen in large quantities, and on good terms, which she delivered out to poor industrious women, to make into shirts for the army; and paid them a just price for their labour; and as no other charge was made, Government was supplied with these shirts at a cheaper rate than ordinary contractors could afford.

industrious goodness? Verily it shall in no wise lose its reward.

And that mercy, which God loves and will reward in the individual, he will not fail to manifest towards a nation distinguished by the general exercise of christian charity, however, by many offences, obnoxious to his wrath. Charity covereth the multitude of sins; doth it not seem to cover ours? Whilst the conflagration of war flames throughout Europe, and lays its finest provinces in blood and desolation; and whilst even our own best blood and treasure are exhausted in the common calamity; yet the mercy of heaven hath graciously averted from our happy shores the actual experience of the most tremendous horrors of war. It is true, the widow and the desolate mother mourn the destruction attending this savage phrenzy, which has committed thus man against man in the bloody field: but yet, thank God, we behold not the worst; for whilst brimstone and fire from the Lord rain down on guilty Sodom and Gomorrah, our less sinful city is spared for the righteous who dwell therein; and whilst our neighbours fly in horror before the dogs of war, who are let loose, in full cry, upon them, the image of blessed peace still reigns around us, and smiles upon our city, and our favoured island. *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sake, I will wish thee prosperity.*

prosperity. (Pf. cxxii. 8.) The works of charity which rise before heaven, on every side, are accepted as atonements, which avert from us the anger of God; they stand in the sea between us and the enemy an impassable barrier, to them dismay and terror, *a pillar of clouds and darkness;* but to us, a rock of defence, the safe conduct of God's providential care, *a pillar of fire in the night,* and the brightness of his holy presence.

We are assembled here this day to worship God, and to continue to conciliate his favour and mighty protection by further works of charity. And perhaps of the whole extensive range which this christian virtue takes for the benefit of mankind, none seems more pleasing in his sight, than the object of our present attention. Our Lord's merciful and tender acceptance of infancy is the sanction of the offering we are prepared to make this day. *Suffer the little children to come unto me,* says his holy Gospel, *and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.* (Mark x. 14.) His commands in this respect have been faithfully obeyed by his people. And the favoured mode of exercising charity, among the wisest and the best of Christians, has been the establishment of schools for the children of the public, to instruct them in religion and good arts.

Establishments of this kind have therefore been long the theme of public recommendation, and of
public

public approbation; and the subject has been exhausted by our best divines, and by our ablest advocates. But as the consideration of our duty not only admits, but even requires frequent repetition, I shall not hesitate to recal to your minds some well known truths on this important subject.

If the measure of charitable donations were limited within narrower bounds than the free benevolence of your hearts; if it were forbidden to give in order to gratify the feelings, and that judgment alone was to be consulted in cases of this kind; if it were necessary to be rigid œconomists in charity, and that before we disposed of our alms, we were obliged to calculate exactly what might be the most probable mode of making them produce the utmost possible good—I must acknowledge, that the education of the children of the public would appear to surpass all other modes of charity: feeling and sentiment might plead for other charitable institutions, and thank God they do not plead in vain; but reason and judgment would confer their bounty on these establishments. For it must be acknowledged, that the highest benefit, which one human being can confer upon another, is a religious and suitable education. And in the humbler spheres of life, that is to be acquired at a small expence,

If, as far as possible, to prevent evil, and to secure good, be better than any redress after the

evil has happened. If to navigate in safety, through a difficult and rough passage, be better than to rescue from shipwreck; the benefit bestowed by the good instructions of a pious education is greater than every other benefit. If the design of enlightened and christian charity be, therefore, to reform whatever appears to be wrong in the conduct of the people (and God knows too much requires reformation) it is to be accomplished only by the early education of the rising generation: or if it desire to communicate any good, it can be best effected only when the mind is soft and capable of receiving just impressions. Man is the creature of habit, and if he once adopt evil or injurious habits, it is difficult in the extreme to eradicate them; the prophet represents it as a natural impossibility. *Can the ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.* (Jer. xiii. 23.) From childhood, therefore, must be laid the foundation of every good hope in life, and every good prospect for hereafter. *O God thou art my God, early will I seek thee: my voice shalt thou hear betimes, O Lord; early in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.* (Ps. v. 3.) If ignorance were to be banished, or wisdom implanted; if vice and idleness, and every noxious weed of the mind were to be eradicated, and virtue, and religion, and industry to be sown; if we would hope for a plentiful harvest, the seed time must
not

not be passed over, we must cultivate in time, and sow the good seed early.

But education, upon the supposition of a plan of oeconomy in charity, will be found to surpass all others in excellence, as producing the greatest effects, from the smallest means.

For what does education accomplish particularly for the children of the people? We are ready to acknowledge a very little indeed; but then, that little is of the utmost importance. Education only turns up the soil, it only sows the seed, it only discovers the mine, it only unlocks the spring, it only plants the sapling twig. Slight operations all: but if these be not performed, it is in vain that you possess the richest soil, in vain you store up that measure of seed which might wave in a golden harvest, and become the bread of thousands. God has given to that measure of seed all the secret wonders of fruitfulness: but what avails it, if it be never committed to the earth, if it be never swelled with the dews of heaven, if it be never evolved, and matured by the influence of the blessed sun? it rots neglected and unsightly; useless, or injurious. What though the swelling hills teem with the precious metals, and what though the rich ore runs through all their veins; if they be undiscovered, they must remain unwrought, when the working might benefit thousands, and bring, to their possessor, riches and honour. If the sapling twig, which now rots under

der foot, or burns in the fire, had only been planted by some tender hand, it might have become a spreading and a vigorous tree, the glory and the ornament of the land ; and when in process of time it should be cut down from the mountain's side, it might be destined to still nobler uses, and convey to our shores, from distant regions, the riches of commerce, or, under heaven's more especial direction, ride triumphant over the seas, a glorious bulwark to guard the peace of our happy islands. What wisdom, except that which surpasses human prudence, can foretel the important consequences, which may follow the care of one of these little plants?

Education it is alone which makes the great disparity between man and man; education unlocks the springs of the soul, and sets at their free operation the native vigor and energies which are bound in the cold and chains of ignorance. Henceforward the mind is free, independant, active, secure, elevated, drawing from its own resources its principles and its strength; and then alone a man may be said to live, and to enjoy the whole dignity of his nature. It is true this may be applicable chiefly to the higher degrees of education; but the most humble initiation into knowledge is not without its just share of these advantages; nay, I must say, that the greatest and the best portion of them are to be found on the very threshold of knowledge. The very first rudiments

ments of letters open the most astonishing field of wisdom and information to the human mind: *to read*, is to be able to converse with thousands of the wisest and the best, and to hear them repeat their precepts at pleasure, again and again; *to read*, is to be furnished (we may almost say) with another sense, which human sagacity hath added to those supplied by the bounty of our creator: to be ignorant of this degree of knowledge of letters, is the most wretched darkness; such ignorance is not only deprived of the highest of rational enjoyments, and innocent delights, but is shut out from the surest knowledge of the most divine and necessary truths. Such unfortunate men are led about by others like the blind; their information is derived from chance and hearsay, from fluctuating and winged words, and from unfixed sounds; and as many teach to err, and few what is right, as broad is the way of destruction, and narrow the path that leadeth unto life, their danger is great. They cannot themselves draw their morality and religion, from the clear fountains of the Scriptures; they cannot compare and verify the permanent and unaltered record of life; the sacred page is a blank before their sight; and the holy Gospel, which sounds a warning to the sinner, and invites, with sweet persuasion, to rest, in their Redeemer, those *that labour, and are heavy laden*, is to them, except as they learn through the senses of other men, an universal blank, all silence and darkness—

They

They have *eyes to see, and see not; and ears have they to hear, but they hear not; neither do they understand:* (Matt. xiii. 13.) How happily and how piously, therefore, are the inestimable first rudiments of letters, associated with early religious instruction, in these charitable establishments!

If the excellency of charitable institutions were to be estimated by the permanent effects, in this view also to provide for the education of the children of the people will appear to surpass all other charities. The boon of the liberal hand, which penury receives, is quickly exhausted, and he wants again; but instruction in good arts lasts as long as life, and instruction in the religion of Christ endures to eternity. *The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field; which indeed is the least of all seeds, but when it is grown it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof:* (Matt. xiii. 31.) A little knowledge is a growing treasure, it is a spring of sweet waters, which sends forth a perpetual and unexhausted stream, carrying fertility and refreshment through all the windings of its course. The instruction of a single child, in the same manner, whilst it gives him the power of drawing from his own resources, and sustaining himself by his own talents, confines not those benefits merely to himself, but communicates

nicates a share of them to all the society with which he is connected.

And here I cannot avoid turning your attention to the peculiar excellence of the institution for which we plead this day, which, with a degree of wisdom and piety most highly deserving imitation, has made particular provision for the extension of its advantages beyond their usual influence. Its regulations are so contrived, as to have a strong regard not only to the temporal and eternal interests of the children, which are the immediate objects of its care, but also to have a retrospect to the parents themselves, and to involve them, in some measure, in the benefits intended to their offspring. Parental affection and parental ambition are the strong springs which they endeavour to move: and, it is piously to be hoped, with the happiest effects. For where is the parent who would not, for the sake of his child, refrain from that evil to which he may be prone from bad habit or inclination, and of which he would disregard the consequences to himself? The devoted drunkard will be often found to remove with terror from the lips of his darling boy the liquid poison, by which he himself is dying. It is from parental affection alone that sin obtains its proper name, and by it is held in just abhorrence. A father would not have his sins, of whatever complexion they are, visited upon his children; he keeps them from the sight
of

of his son, through tenderness for the child, through respect for the honoured name of father: nay, it has happened, that a reformation has been wrought by these strong motives, when conscience, the world, and religion have failed. If in the world, and in every class, we have beheld females, regardless of their reputation, plunge into excesses, which have banished them from the more virtuous of their sex; however careless of themselves they may appear to be, how seldom are they so lost to all sense of nature as to be indifferent concerning the reputation of their children: are they careless of the feelings of their gallant boy? Would they not give the world to be capable of inspiring him with respect, and not be condemned to extinguish in shame the rising glory of his manly pride? Their lovely daughters, alas! how can they shield the tender and opening flowers from the blight of dishonour?

When all sense of parental love and dignity has not been lost, unhappy parents, of this description, have been known to live in voluntary banishment from their beloved children, and to consign with deep reluctance to strange, but less polluted hands, the tender cares in which they dare not indulge. Observe through life the sacred relation of parent and child; see how jealous both are of their mutual honour. What child, in all the circle of human society, is so base in mind as to hear with indifference any reproach against
his

his parents? What parent can bear the injury or disgrace of his child? Not the savage beast of prey alone, but even the most timid animal, defends her young with unwonted courage. Neither is man void of the sacred instinct of this wise and provident partiality: what will not a parent do to obtain—to secure for the darling child, honour, reputation, wealth, and every blessing that earth or heaven can bestow? This is the great centre of all the most powerful of human affections, pervading with irresistible influence all ranks of men.

Most prudently, therefore, most wisely have you, the founders of this seminary of religion, and virtue, and useful instruction, possessed yourselves of this powerful hold on the mind, and connected in your most benevolent objects the parent and the child. You have given an example, worthy to be imitated: and may it be extensively imitated, to the restraining of vice and immorality, and to the incitement of industry, good order, and decency in the established generation, as well as to the implanting of religion and virtue and good arts in the rising generation, and in generations to come.

An institution conducted on these principles, and aims bestowed for these objects, are in truth the most exalted applications of christian charity: they are its most extensive and permanent applications; they are its most necessary applications, whether we
 consider

consider the interests of society in this world, or the eternal salvation of the soul in the world to come. To *train up the child in the way he should go*, in industry, virtue, and religion, and, as far as possible, to implicate the parent in the blessed effects of his instruction, is not only the office of humanity and religion, but it is the wisdom of the soundest policy, and the exertion of the most genuine patriotism. Pursue then, under the blessing of heaven, your excellent object; apply extensively this irresistible power on which you have taken hold, *the affections of the parent*, and use it, in conjunction with other means which God has put into your hands, to inform and to reform the people. Let the parents who hear me turn their thoughts into their own bosoms, and feel what they would be ready to do for the advantage of their beloved children, and thence calculate what would prove the well-directed influence of such an interest in the human breast.

And, surely, if ever it were necessary to use the best means of reformation of the people, for theirs as well as our own security, that awful time has now arrived. The prophet, in former days, said to Jerusalem---*This people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone. For among my people are found wicked men; they lay wait as he that setteth snares: they set a trap, they catch men: (Jer. v. 26.) They are grievous revolvers, walking with slanders; they are brass and iron,*

iron, they are all corrupters: (Jer. vi. 28.) In consequence of this he threatens them with war and desolation—*Thus saith the Lord: behold a people cometh from the north country, and a great nation shall be raised from the sides of the earth. They shall lay hold on bow and spear; they are cruel and have no mercy; their voice roareth like the sea, and they ride upon horses set in array for war, against thee, O daughter of Zion:* (Jer. vi. 22.) Have not malicious enemies, public and domestic, been using every engine of disaffection amongst our people? Have they not propagated, among the habitations of peace and ignorance, wild opinions, subversive of all law, as well as of all religion? Look upon the recent transactions in various counties of this kingdom; and look abroad towards the cruel enemy, which hath, to use the language of the prophet, no mercy. The awful and dubious fate of war hangs over us; but we have God on our side, and will not fear the malice of our enemies. We have spread over us the sacred shield of charity and of good works, which shall, notwithstanding our sins, continue to secure to us the protection of heaven, and bind together, in one common interest, every order of society. Benefits communicated, and benefits received, and those of the highest magnitude, shall unite as brothers, the rich and the poor; and true knowledge, wisdom, and religion will teach the humble and industrious, that no change could ob-

tain for them more certain blessings than they now derive from the paternal care of those whom heaven hath appointed *as the fathers of the poor*, and set over them; *as the wise stewards of God's household, who so faithfully discharge their trust, and minister to their fellow-servants their meat in due season.*

When I look upon the public statement of the accounts of this infant charity: when I see the amount of the munificent contributions by which, with all its expensive buildings, it has been established; I should be inclined to apprehend that ordinary exertions in charity might have been exhausted. But the names of the benefactors of this institution at once relieve me from such apprehensions: they are the known supporters of every good work.—*The blessing of him that was ready to perish has fallen upon them, they have made the orphan and the widow's heart to sing for joy: (Job, xxix. 13.)*

Their names are known in distant climates*, as well as at home: their names are known beyond the bounds of this earth, they are registered in heaven. They are *fit for the kingdom of God: they are prepared to follow their Lord, whithersoever he goeth: (Matt. viii. 19.)* They have put their hand to the plough, and have not looked back: (Luke, ix. 62.)

* In India.

There attends the exercise of charity the same species of delight which accompanies and recommends every other habitual virtue : and they who have once tasted the sincere pleasure of doing good, who have once truly experienced that it is indeed more *blest to give than to receive*, will, on no just and worthy occasion, refrain from exercising their benevolence. If habit powerfully draw a man into reiterated sins, which leave behind remorse and injury ; why should not habits of goodness much more effectually influence to frequent repetition, when they fill the mind with sweet self-approbation, and actually bring down the blessings of heaven even in this life ? Shew me the man, among this congregation of the Lord, whose fortune has been injured, or whose resources are drained, by his most munificent and noble donations on the call of christian charity. No : christian charity, even in its most liberal exertions, is not like the wasteful extravagance of the world ; it is a just portion, well bestowed ; it is, from the wealthy, something out of their abundance ; it is, from the poor, the widow's mite ; it is, the *loaves and fishes divided among hungry thousands*, with God's blessing, and by his blessing miraculously benefiting all. Nay, God's more especial blessing attends the charitable man, if we believe experience and the word of truth.---*There is that scattereth and yet increaseth*, says the wise king :—and *cast thy bread upon the waters, and after*

many days thou shalt find it : (Ecc. xi. 1.) And better are the words of the apostle---*Be not weary of well-doing, for in due time thou shalt reap, if thou faint not : (Gal. vi. 9.)* Though you should not reap here, what doth it signify ? Your treasure accumulates in heaven, *where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt.* No : it is not the liberal hand that closes against the frequent demands of charity ; it is not the bountiful heart that grudges when it is called upon again ; it is not the merciful soul, which gives often and largely, that complains of reiterated demands. It is only the narrow soul of hard Mammon, which always denies ; it is his dull ear alone, which is open to no cry ; it is his cold and iron grasp, which unlocks to no sollicitation. When they who have been used to give, and who have given bountifully, appear in the house of God, and in the cause of charity, they will give again.

In full persuasion of the prevalence of this blessed disposition among you, I shall forbear to press farther upon your attention the peculiar excellencies of the plan of this institution. I shall only remind you of your former bounty, and trust you will not fall short of your own examples. If you were liberal last year, the same resources, I trust, remain to enable you to do as much on this day : I trust that God hath even continued to encrease your store, whilst he hath also continued to pour his grace upon your hearts.---His

blessings fall upon us day by day, and year by year. And let us reflect, that it is not only by his especial providence that we prosper, but also by his especial providence that we exist, and pass our years in blessed tranquillity and peace. We owe, therefore, to him perpetual acknowledgment, and renewed offerings. Let us not, therefore, be sparing on those good occasions, for which particularly his blessings are lent to us: *But let us give, every man as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver: (II. Cor. ix. 7.) Whilst we have time let us do good to all men, for we shall shortly be obliged to relinquish our possessions, and go to render account of our stewardship. Above all, let those whom their Lord hath blessed with abundance, whom he hath made rulers over his household, now give them their meat in due season, and prove themselves faithful and wise servants. For ---Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: verily I say unto you, he shall make him ruler over all his goods: (Matt. xxiv. 46.) He shall exalt him to eternal glory, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Of which blessed consummation, that we may all be found worthy, by the sincere discharge of our duty, on this and every future occasion, God of his infinite mercy grant, through the same, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.*

THE
JOURNAL
OF
THE
AMERICAN
MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
CHICAGO, ILL.
1914

SERMON X.

Preached at the MAGDALEN ASYLUM, March 20, 1795.

MATTHEW XV. 25, 26.

" THEN CAME SHE, AND WORSHIPPED HIM,

" SAYING, LORD HELP ME.

" BUT HE ANSWERED, AND SAID, IT IS NOT

" MEET TO TAKE THE CHILDRENS BREAD

" AND TO CAST IT TO DOGS."

THE manner of our Lord was to speak in parables, and this strong figure fell from his lips. I doubt not the present occasion may have already suggested an application for it. If the Lord of unbounded mercy, by this severe answer, determined a woman to be disqualified from his relief, only because she was a stranger, and not a daughter of the house of Israel, for he declared he was sent to their lost sheep; must not we, whose means of doing good are limited, consider the objects of this charity as more highly disqualified from our assistance, when compared with the more deserving, whom we may prejudice by lavishing our bounty on them?

We know the strongest prepossessions prevail in the minds of many against this charity. The

unfortunate we shelter here seem to them unworthy. The natural abhorrence entertained against their sins, by the pure mind; the necessity reflecting minds conceive to discountenance them in society; the difficulty of reclaiming, and the reserve made of alms for objects considered more deserving; all operate against us. And were it not for the generous protection of the first characters of that sex, to whom the errors of our penitents must appear the most odious, we should be in danger, this day, of pleading their cause in vain.

From the Lord of mercy downwards, in every instance, the purest mind, and the truest Christian, are found most ready to make allowance, even for the sins they abhor. And it is with no small pride that I take occasion to observe of our fair countrywomen, that they, who are, to a proverb, true delicacy itself, are most easily moved to pardon and relieve female errors. Perhaps (for so in a higher degree we think of heaven) the purest mind feels the deepest sense of the abject misery attending sin.

But, if the words of our text had been applied by our Lord in their strict literal sense, we should have an objection to get over (in a religious view) of greater difficulty, and higher authority than all the others. We shall find, however, that he uttered them with no such meaning, but only in order to try the faith of the woman who supplicated him,

him, and to manifest, at once, his miraculous power and unbounded benevolence. The story, as it stands at large in either of the sacred historians who have delivered it to us, will be the best proof of what I assert. I shall lay before you St. Matthew's account. *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; and behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, have mercy on me, O Lord thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, send her away, for she crieth after us. But he answered, and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord help me. But he answered, and said, it is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs. And she said, truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

When we read this story, and consider the character of our Lord, we cannot put that severe construction on the words of our text, which they seem at first to admit. His express employment was to go about doing good, and to heal the broken-hearted. His unexampled benevolence was never known to reject the petition of any that applied
to

to him for relief, neither did he, in this instance, for *her daughter was healed from that very hour*. Why then did he speak so severely? Evidently to prove to the multitude the woman's faith, and to manifest his own glory. He seemed to refuse, that he might be prevailed upon more effectually to grant, and not through severity or determined want of feeling.

We may recollect, in the Gospel, many examples of this manner of our Lord, where he questions strictly before he opens the bounty of his goodness. Not that we can conceive, he, who on every occasion shewed himself acquainted with the very thoughts of those he conversed with, wanted information: but, in all appearance, he questioned for the instruction of those who heard him, to awaken their belief, by conferring such signal blessings on the faith of the petitioner: *go thy way* (was his common address to those he healed) *thy faith hath made thee whole*.

And, as his life was for our example, he, perhaps, has thus instructed *us* to question freely before we extend our charity. We do not, therefore, on this ground, condemn those who seem to disapprove of this institution; however, we hope that we shall not want even their aid, if we can give a reasonable answer to their severest objections. This I propose as the business of this discourse; and, I trust, if I succeed in any proportion to the goodness of my cause, that they will follow

our

our Lord's example in the other part also, and from this hour endeavour to heal the *stranger's daughter*, who is *grievously vexed with a devil*.

The success of any institution, under the protection of an enlightened public, must depend on two principles: First, On the excellency of the ends to be attained by the institution. And, secondly, On the proper conduct of it; as the public bounty must not be lavished in vain, whatever the pretended purpose may be.

In this respect, we are happy to have it in our power to give the fullest satisfaction to our generous patrons: and, were it not a tedious and unnecessary business to trouble your attention with on the present occasion, we could go into the most minute particulars. One circumstance only seems requisite to be mentioned before this audience, that, notwithstanding your repeated bounty, the resources of this charity are rather declining. The fund, at the beginning of this year, was considerably less than at the beginning of the last; and yet, extraordinary efforts were made, and means applied, for which there can be expected no substitute this year, except from your bounty. The extraordinary means I allude to, were certain arrears paid to this house, a legacy of 50l., and the profits arising from the sale of the sixth volume of Dr. Skelton's works, which he generously presented to this charity, as he had also the former.

And

And the causes in part of the decrease in our funds have been, the dearness of provisions in the last year, and the necessity of renewing the furniture of this house, much impaired, after 16 years service.

That every circumstance of this charity has been conducted with the strictest œconomy and propriety, the very names at the head of it are sufficient to vouch; but the state of the accounts has been annually published, and that of the last year will speedily, for the farther satisfaction of those who interest themselves in this good work.

However, the strict œconomy and propriety with which this charity is conducted, will not be sufficient to entitle it to the protection of all. There are many who object against the very institution in itself. And even amongst those who now cherish it with the dew of their bounty, some, I fear, are to be found, whose protection is derived chiefly from the influence of the respectable names at our head. And though the poor, the industrious, and the unfortunate, may cry to Heaven to spare them to their earnest prayers, yet, in the course of nature, their *day must now be nearly spent*, their *labour of love* almost ended, and they must soon leave them to receive their everlasting reward.

Were they to continue with us always, these strayed sheep should not be dispersed for lack of a shepherd.

shepherd. Were they to continue with us always, our institution might rest secure on their countenance; but, as this is beyond our hopes, we could wish, when the influence that raised it is removed, it might stand supported by its own solidity and excellence. What is in my power I will therefore do; I mean to lay before you the chief objections made against it, and to endeavour to shew how far they may be the result of a partial and unequal consideration of the advantages and necessity of this institution.

One of the most specious objections against this charity is founded on the presumption, *That much greater good might be produced from the sums necessary to its support, which are expended by the public, as is alleged, on objects unworthy their attention, and unlikely to be reclaimed.* If this charge can be maintained on principle and facts, we resign that liberal protection already so abundantly experienced, and which we this day hope you will repeat.

As to the principle on which this objection is grounded, it seems to me erroneous, both in judgment and christian charity. The strong laws of opinion have, we know, made irremediable, to the weaker sex, those sacred bounds that divide virtue from vice: once transgressed, there is no return. The grave of reputation lies beyond them; from which, after it has triumphed in the death of innocence, there is no redemption. A fair
name

name is blotted for ever, and every desperate consequence follows inevitably to the unhappy offender. But why should we make the milder laws of Heaven pronounce our rigid sentence? Hath not the Gospel of Christ opened the bosom of unbounded mercy to every sincere penitent? And Heaven will accept the contrition of all who are truly such, though men reject them.

No wonder (were it not for the medium of some asylum like this) if, under the unrelenting laws of society, where it is forbidden to hope for mercy, an unfortunate female should never attempt to return to the narrow path of virtue, whence her feet had wandered; but, after the first error, hurry on in the broad way of destruction, and embrace for life dishonour and desperation together. Hence it is that it is hard to reclaim from errors of this nature. But is it not therefore the more necessary? Is it not therefore the more christian, to rescue, if possible, both body and soul from more imminent perdition?

I know not how to estimate the precise proportion of good that may be produced from a certain sum; but find it difficult to conceive a greater return than this: *Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know, that he, which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.*

If

If still you apprehend *your bounty here may deprive the more deserving*, look sincerely into your hearts, which of you has felt any inconvenience from the amount of all your charitable contributions? *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth.* The liberal soul hath felt no inconvenience; but the best supporters of other pious institutions have also proved the strongest pillars of this. We cry, therefore, to you, as the disinherited Esau did to his father Isaac, *Hast thou but one blessing, my father?* Bless me, even me also, O my father.

But these women (you will say) *in order to obtain the comforts of this retreat, counterfeit a penitence they never feel; and their return to the world is their return to former sin.* Some, we acknowledge, do fall again, ungrateful to your bounty and the grace of God: but *all* are not therefore hypocrites, or unworthy. For forty, for twenty, for ten, nay even for *five* righteous men, God had spared the sinful city! Let these penitents find equal grace in *your* sight. If this institution hath been the means of saving a single soul alive, a mighty work hath been done! But what if, under God, it hath saved many? We have the best reason to think so, from every symptom by which men can judge that the mind is restored to health; of which many examples might be produced, recent, and on the most respectable testimony. And judge what sentiments the heads of this charity must feel, when they see, through their aid, an unfortunate female change,

change a state of misery, vice, ignorance, idleness, and despair, into tranquillity, virtue, industry, and hope in her Redeemer !

But I request it may be observed, as material in the estimation of the good effects of this institution, that in outward appearances it differs essentially from all others.

The various seminaries, piously established for the preservation and instruction of the orphan, the hospitals erected to shelter and relieve the blind, the infirm, and the old, all have their splendid and *visible* effects in society. Their *light so shineth before men, that they see their good works, and glorify our Father which is in Heaven.* And if education, shelter, food, or raiment, happen to be bestowed on the unworthy or the ungrateful, it seldom reaches the public ear ; or if it should, brings no prejudice on the institution, the goodness of which they have abused. In general all the advantages arising to the objects are known, and all their misconduct concealed.

The public knowledge of the effects of *this charity* is derived from the *very contrary*. This is much to our prejudice, in the eyes of the world ; but cannot be avoided. The nature of this asylum is to cover, under the deep veil of retirement, the memory and the consequences of those errors that bring shame and dishonour to the penitent : which would be renewed, and her repentance probably rendered vain, were she to publish her own gratitude.

rude, or your goodness. When the Christian heals the unfortunate female, let him say with our Lord, *Go thy way, and see that thou tell no man.* And *when he doth his alms*, above all let him forbear to *blow the trumpet* in this silent retreat, lest he awake the deep oblivion, in which the security of his feeble patient is reposed. Silence, and secrecy, and separation from all former acquaintance, are the established regimen prescribed to every penitent, from the moment of her departure from under this friendly shelter. She must begin the world again after her spiritual regeneration here. She seeks strange people, strange companions, and a strange land; *she spreads her wings, that she may fly away, and be at rest.* And then, she meditates on your bounty, in silent gratitude; she begins to live anew to the world, and to God, and you hear of her *no more*. But if she flee not with precipitation to the mountains from the guilty *Sodom*, she must be consumed amongst the former companions of her sin. Nay, if she do but even look back, she remains fixed in your streets, a standing monument of her own vileness and ingratitude, and of your ill-placed bounty; pointed at by every finger, and gibed upon by every lip.—*Remember Lot's wife.* Of these lost females we hear but too often; and they, who condemn their sin according to the full rigour of the law, are by every such instance more strongly confirmed in the opinion, that a woman's reputation once lost, she

can never again return to virtue: and, of consequence, they look on any institution of this kind as vain and abortive in itself. I have already considered the want of charity in thus pronouncing any sinner past reformation. The severity of the world, which brands indelible infamy on female errors, and the despair of the wretch thus abandoned, may indeed make a return very difficult. To this may possibly be added that depravity of mind supposed to be necessarily contracted before she can force through the host of formidable monsters set as the guard over female purity. But can no enchantment lull those monsters to sleep? And is depravity of mind the only cause of female frailty? Are there no palliations, no excuses to be found for innocence when it yields in the unequal contest to villainy, reinforced by all his base auxiliaries of vows, and perjuries, and passion? And must every woman, like our first parent, who tasted the forbidden tree, die inevitably in her sins, when she has once lost her innocence, and known evil? Nay, would she not rather, the moment her eyes are opened (for quickly they are) fly to hide her face and her shame, detest her guilt, and return to virtue, were she not *driven out* from repentance and peace by the *flaming sword of vengeance, which turns brandished every way against her*. Let us not be found too severe against any of the various catalogue of human frailties. *In many things we offend all; and the best*

best of us, alas! are too prone to relapse into those errors we had resolved most strongly to renounce.

To what I have said I conceive some person may give the following answer: *The feelings of humanity, and the charity of a Christian incline me to treat unfortunate females with tenderness; and I should applaud the means which could be devised to save them, consistent with that punishment the magnitude and dangerous consequences of their errors require they should suffer from society, in order to deter others the more effectually by their sad examples.* Is this then your answer? Believe us, you are not acquainted with the true purposes of this charity; neither do you seem sufficiently assured, that the world will most inevitably pour out the full measure of its indignation on such offenders. No! the danger is that their punishment may be too severe! which shall fix a mark on their forehead, and drive them out of society with the bloody Cain, though less guilty: making them cry out with him, *My punishment is greater than I can bear! behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass that every one that findeth me shall slay me.* Too surely female dishonour meets, in the discountenance and misery which attend it, sufficient to appease in-

jured virtue. Let virtue then accept the *atonement*. Our asylum neither can nor is intended to remove the punishment thus justly earned. It goes no farther than to alleviate its bitterness, to pour into the wounded soul the balm of religion and penitence, and to enable the sinner to *go, and sin no more*. To Heaven alone it belongs to *wash sins of scarlet as white as snow*; but men can point to the sinner her path to Heaven. This is all this institution professes to do, except, if possible, to restore a lost child to her mourning parents, and a lost member to society. *Nor can it be accused as holding out thus encouragement to sin*, unless we could be impious enough to make the same charge against the Gospel, which unbars the gates of Heaven to penitent transgressors. Repentance entitles also to admission here; but who ever sinned in the hope of making atonement, cloistered within these walls? Since perhaps it may be no mistake to assert that few, if any, of the multitude sheltered here had heard that an asylum existed, till their forlorn condition required its protection. Here indeed we acknowledge we are sometimes deceived by feigned repentance; we cannot deceive Heaven. And yet how often do we presume to attempt to mock God, by vows in the days of affliction, which we neglect in prosperity? and by resolutions on the bed of sickness, which we forget as soon as his mercy restores us to *health*?

But

But it is objected farther, that this institution, though it may propose these good ends, and be founded on those pious principles; yet does it not reduce the swarms of dissolute females that infest our streets: and that, besides, none present themselves for admission at these doors through repentance, but driven by extreme wretchedness. Vice indeed does disgrace our city! But as this asylum cannot prevent vice, neither is the purpose of its institution to make an attempt so vain. And though perhaps the number of vicious females is little diminished in appearance, yet has this charity an object which must be considered important to every Christian and every feeling man, that is, to save alive the soul and body of a penitent transgressor; an object, under the blessing of Heaven, often we trust by its means happily accomplished.

If we say, that none present themselves for admission at these doors through repentance, but driven by extreme wretchedness, let us not object to the misery God has entailed on sin, to urge, by fatherly correction, the sinking soul to repentance. And should there be no shelter to render this chastisement effectual, where the sinner shall find it possible to repent? Or in a christian country, in an opulent and charitable city, must their most extreme wretchedness be left abandoned to all the horrors of despondence, obliged to continue beat-

ing the broad ways of perdition, left through absolute want they be hurried to a tremendous eternity?

Ye sons and daughters of luxury and earthly happiness, rise from your splendid banquets, to behold the wandering outcast (perhaps once a beloved child) *glad to feed on the husks the swine do eat*; look at your own purple garments, feel your soft raiment, and then, look on her shreds and nakedness; start from your soft couches and beds of down, and behold her shivering limbs cast on the cold damp earth! Then, (but shall I drop the comparison here?) look around on your parents, your friends, and your children, and look within on your own peaceful bosoms: and once more, if you can bear the sight, cast your eyes on that forlorn being, her person abandoned and outcast, her mind filled with self-condemnation and despair! Now, say has outraged virtue sufficient vengeance? Has society punished her enough? Shall she then, thus degraded below the beasts that perish, eat of the crumbs that fall from your lordly tables? And shall she find this one retreat, where *the evil demon that possesses her shall be driven out*? Tell me, what demoniac was ever an object of greater horror and commiseration? Or doth the father of mischief ever more terribly possess the human body than when he raises rebellious passions, and drives his desperate prey headlong down the steep places of destruction?

O!

Oh! prevent in time her rash madness, and during the lucid interval of repentance and contrition in which she beats her breast against these doors, rescue and restore her to herself, to her country, to salvation, and to those grey hairs her sins are bringing down untimely to the grave. And whilst both the penitent and her dishonoured parents interest all your feelings, recollect that the pure hand of charity can, through our means, extend relief to her *unpolluted*; and that such an institution as this alone is calculated to compose in silence and oblivion their mutual shame and sorrows. Nor let it ever be said in this country, that the most truly christian institution owed its momentary prosperity to the pious labours, and the benign, but too transitory, influence of the distinguished virtues of an individual. And yet perhaps it may; for we have our fears for the permanency of its existence, and I will not conceal them from you.

One generation past, and it shall possibly be remembered, that this asylum once existed, when the parent, bowed by anguish and dishonour, shall perhaps visit its ruins, like the tomb of some departed saint, hoping by the virtue of its mouldering relics, to dispossess the devil from her lost daughter.

Two causes contribute to raise our fears. The government of this institution seems too difficult

for any after the steady but now enfeebled arm that holds its reins. And as these penitents are individually the outcasts of society, so does this charity seem to be disowned by all others. Every door is shut against *them*; every parish looks upon *this institution* as an alien. On these forlorn females are poured out the last dregs of scorn amongst men; against the very walls of this their devoted retreat are fulminated the thunders of surrounding parishes. What then is christian charity bounded by wards and parishes? And if so, are the surrounding parishes so confirmed in virtue, as never to have a wanderer to send to this retreat? Or are we found to reject the lost sheep of any fold? Or do they retain in their parishes more complicated misery than they send to us? Like the wounded Jew in the parable, when these penitents lie plundered (as they are of what is most dear) and half dead, the *priest and the levite not only pass by on the other side*, but lift up their voices, against them. But *good Samaritans*, the fair and virtuous sex, who of all must harbour the strongest enmity against them, *have had compassion on them, have bound up their wounds, pouring in oil and wine, reposed them in an inn, and now, on the morrow are come again to repay liberally what hath been spent more.* From you therefore we still shall look for generous and christian support.

And before it shall please high heaven to translate,

state, like another *Elijah*, the chief patroness of this asylum to immortal glory, we trust a *double portion* of her spirit in Christ shall be *cast down with her mantle* among you. So shall we look to a permanent establishment for a charity that, above all others, most nearly imitates the very and express actions of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Let us then consider the third part of
this system to be the most perfect. We find a
series of four points in which the
with the same amount of work as
a permanent establishment for a country that
shows a more perfect system of
expedition of our ships and
John Child.

SERMON XI.

Preached at the Chapel of the MAGDALEN ASYLUM,
DUBLIN, 3d April, 1791.

JOHN VIII. 2.

“AND JESUS SAID UNTO THE WOMAN, NEI-
“THER DO I CONDEMN THEE, GO, AND SIN
“NO MORE,”

§ I. **T**HE exalted perfection of the religion of Christ, above every other, will readily be acknowledged in a congregation of Christians. We feel its divine authority and its solemn sanctions: we behold the bright illustration with which it discovers and vindicates the ways of Providence; we have our eyes opened upon our true state and destination: we have our hopes elevated: we have our hearts instructed and amended by its pure morality, and we have our exertions directed towards the most perfect example.

But if in all this excellence we may be allowed to consider its most attractive feature, if we might give in a few words the discriminating lines of our Lord's religion, we should call it with eminent distinction, *The Religion of Mercy*. This is the characteristic and incommunicable expression, which unites the whole benevolent dispensation with the most perfect grace and harmony and truth. It is
the

the genuine impresson and resemblance of its blessed and divine Author;—who, breathing ineffable mercy and tenderness, came down to visit mankind, *with healing in his wings*. In this character, the Gospel of Christ stands alone, unrivalled, and distinct from all other religions; and under this character, it well deserves to be cultivated as the religion of the enlightened and thinking mind.

Which of us is exempt from the dangers and vicissitudes of uncertain life? What rank, or what wealth, or what external blessings can guard us against the necessary evils entailed upon our condition? *Man is born to trouble*, as to his natural inheritance, *as the sparks fly upwards*. But the true sources of consolation for man's trouble are found alone in the religion of Christ.

Which of us is free from sin? Which of us feels not himself obnoxious to the wrath of God for many sins? *There is none that doeth good, no not one*. We must, alas! acknowledge, that the *guilt of sin* is even more universal among men than the *lot of misery*. Some may, for a season, even enjoy much happiness in life; nay, it must be acknowledged, many do, through the overflowing goodness of God, *Who bath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant*. Long may they experience his goodness!—For though the way of life leads naturally through thorns and difficulties, yet are they not inevitable or unvaried. Some are found to travel

travel in paths that are even smooth and flowery, and so seldom broken or overgrown, that they may almost be pronounced happy to the end of their journey.—They are indeed but few.—But where shall we find even one man free from sin?—From sin none are exempt; it may be less, it may be great.

Happiness, when past, ceases to be what it was; it retains nothing of its former nature; yesterday's sweetness is this day turned sour and disgusting. But not such is the nature of sin; it is a permanent bitter, an inbred stain, subject to no alteration:—it may be repented of; it cannot be undone—burnt offerings will not qualify it; the blood of sacrifices will not wash it out;—for this one sacrifice alone has been made effectual, and to this it is the part of wisdom to flee.

It is well, then, that this heavenly dispensation hath been vouchsafed to us; yes, to us all: to the best, who are also sinners, as well as to the most miserable and forlorn. The benevolent and comprehensive scheme of Christ's religion offers universal pardon; not limiting the free mercies of God to any particular circumstances, nor excluding from the hope of salvation the most abandoned of the truly penitent sinners.

§ 2. In order more fully to prove our Lord's goodness in this respect, I shall lay before you a few examples of his discourses and gracious condescension to sinners.

Early

Early in his ministry, this merciful condescension to those whom the Jews looked upon with abhorrence, caused them to reproach him with the appellation of *The friend of publicans and sinners*.

But far from considering such malice as any indignity to his person or mission, we find him shortly after in a pharisee's house, permitting the humble offices of a penitent sinner, who anointed his feet, washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. The pharisee was offended, and doubted concerning the prophetic knowledge of his heavenly guest, who suffered a sinner to approach him. But he gently rebuked him in the parable of the *creditor, who forgave his two debtors; to one five hundred, and to the other fifty pence*: and claiming under this allegory her stronger gratitude for his greater mercy, he pronounced to her *the remission of her many sins*.

The true disposition for conciliating the forgiveness of God is perhaps oftener awakened in the breast of the alarmed sinner, who is terrified at his own enormity, than in his bosom whose smaller sins, instead of causing repentance, are overlooked, and give birth to an insolent and dangerous security. The following parable of our Lord will set this danger in a stronger light. *Two men went up into the temple to pray, the one a pharisee, and the other a publican. The pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not, as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or*
even

even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.—Have any of us entered into this house of God with sentiments too careless, or too confident? Do we make proud comparisons of our more acceptable estate in his eyes who judgeth only by the heart; who balances errors against ignorance; who weighs crimes against temptations, and who requireth at every man's hands only in proportion to the talents he hath given him?—Have we set any pharisaical value on the merit of our alms and the support we intend this christian work?—And when we do our duty by sharing with the miserable a scanty portion of God's abundant blessings, which we shall never miss, are we overforward to call ourselves profitable servants? But I proceed:—*And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other.*

Zaccheus, the publican, was rich, and offered, as a restitution to any he might have wronged, half his goods to the poor: an example worthy of imitation to a certain degree, and worthily rewarded by our Lord's answer: *This day salvation is come to thine house; for the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

On another occasion, at the house of Levi, a publican, a great company of publicans and others sat down at meat with him. But the scribes and

pharisees murmured, saying, *How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering, said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.*

The whole 15th chapter of St. Luke is addressed to publicans and sinners for their comfort and assurance. It contains three parables, representing in the strongest light God's mercy to their repentance, and with a force of expression very remarkable. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.*

In the first parable is described the joy of a man who recovered a *lost sheep*. In the next, that of a woman who found a *piece of money* she had lost. But in the third, a father rejoices in the recovery of his *lost child*.—This parable is of singular beauty, and always affords a peculiar delight to every reader of sensibility or observation. The prodigal son is a true picture of the vain confidence, the intemperance and ruin of youth.—But, though we feel he deserved punishment, we think it has fallen upon him too heavily.—We are therefore pleased at his purpose of repentance, and even at the distant hope of his restoration. And when his father receives him again as his child, instead of degrading him as an hired servant; a sentiment of pleasure and approbation strikes every feeling heart from childhood to settled experience. It is remarkable

remarkable also, that the jealousy of the elder brother never fails to excite some degree of indignation. We wish him at first some punishment from his father; but have our hearts softened again by the equality and paternal kindness of the good man, and our last feeling is satisfaction of a calmer and happier cast: *Son, thou art ever with me, and all I have is thine: it was meet that we should make merry and be glad; for this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.*

Can it be at all necessary to make an application to our poor prodigals, who have suffered from the same causes as the prodigal in the parable, the same miseries, indeed miseries much more dreadful, and exaggerated deeply by the circumstance of their *sex*?—They forsook the guide of their youth, and went far astray;—they sought pleasure, but found sorrow;—they ran into riot and excess, but soon there was to them a famine in the land, and they began to be in want;—they joined themselves to a citizen, but oh! to a worse one than the prodigal met in the parable;—they joined themselves to *infamy* and fed swine, and were fain to eat of the husks that were cast before them, for no man gave unto them.—O! base servitude of sin: O! miserable degradation.—But they arose, confessing their sins before heaven and before you,—you received them; your generous bounty has given to them comfortable food and raiment. Such unhopèd-for compassion is to them a *ring for their hands*, and

shoes for their feet, and the best robe, and the fatted calf.—It is also true that their *elder brother* (those charities of which you are likewise the *parents*) is *offended*.—But still, I trust, you will carry us to the end of the parable and of your bounty, and tell them, that it was *meet* you should this day give us a festival, and kill the *fatted calf*; *because they were dead, and are alive again, and were lost, and are found.*

I have yet to lay before you another example of our Lord's conduct towards sinners, and I shall consider his authority and example in our case sufficiently illustrated. This example seems nearer to our present purpose than even the last.

A woman had been taken in adultery, and such was the rigour of the law of Moses against that crime, that the punishment of the guilty was immediate and ignominious death.—Good God! were this rigour now exerted, how would the sword of justice reek with blood in every guilty city in Europe?—And how rapidly does the contagion spread towards this our island, once the sequestered retirement of female modesty; once renowned for connubial fidelity; but now with guilty commerce emulously importing foreign vices!—Our Lord indeed mitigated the severity of the mosaic law, and the penalty on violated chastity was changed from death to shame. On the great, this penalty can operate but little in any country, according to the present state of society: it has been so relaxed
also,

also, that shame is almost totally remitted in their case; but the humble sinner receives the full price indeed; *infamy* is her sad lot, and abhorrence, and rejection, and outcast despair, worse than death itself. I do not represent these as undeserving of punishment, or estimate how much the others justly merit, but from the nature of their mutual circumstances: the punishment of the one exceeds all bounds of justice, whilst the other is scarcely discountenanced:—the one is prevented from bread, and driven to fill up the measure of sin, in order to sustain her very existence:—the other lives independent of industry, and so far sins unconcerned for the event.—The one, connected with those who owe their livelihood to their fair character, is thrust out like a pestilence or a famine, lest she should blight their labours, and bring poverty into her father's house along with her infamy;—the other, united to those whose fortunes are not affected by her shame, has only to gain the countenance, that is, the blindness and the wordy complaisance of her acquaintance, and she has in that a dispensation for her frailty.—Nor is it so hard a matter, if any reserve be kept, to obtain this negative and smothered complaisance in the loose and cold ceremonial of life; even were former acquaintance not to feel a difficulty and pain to turn away their eyes from their once familiar friend, were there even no tenderness at the heart, no apprehension of irritating the desperate

insult of alarmed guilt, or of wounding the worthy, the respectable, and blushing connections of the sinner, who struggle anxiously to cast a specious veil over the frailty that hurts their honour.

This is the state of society in perhaps every great city in Europe.—They whose sin proceeds from a wanton heart, and not from dire necessity; they who should know better, and are therefore most guilty, suffer the lightest punishment.—In such cases our Lord's just judgment is sadly reversed; that *They who knew their Lord's will and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

But to return to the conduct of our Lord towards the woman taken in adultery.—The pharisees, often offended at his indulgence to sinners, rejoiced in this occasion to triumph over him, presuming the law to be so explicit, that he could not save the guilty wretch. They set the woman before him in the midst, with this question, *Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned; but what sayest thou? He forebore at first to answer: And stooping down, he wrote on the ground as though he heard them not. So when they continued asking him, he lift up himself and said unto them, he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again he stooped down and wrote upon the ground. And they which heard it being convicted by their own conscience, went one by one, beginning at the eldest even unto the last. And Jesus was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. When*
Jesus

Jesus had lift up himself and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers,—bath no man condemned thee? She said, no man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her,—NEITHER DO I CONDEMN THEE;—GO, AND SIN NO MORE.

*He that is without sin among you, said our Lord unto the accusers——but they were every one convicted by their own consciences of sin; nay, of that very sin against which they had shewn themselves so full of vengeance.—Detestable cruelty! vile hypocrisy! In an age wherein the honourable estate of matrimony is renounced for the convenience of pride, or for the loose and often fatal indulgence of sensuality, who is free from this general crime, this universal pollution?—Who amongst men at large is not in this respect more or less guilty?—Who has not, in some degree, contributed to delude or to betray female purity, or to hurry on towards ruin that which had already been deluded and betrayed?—What passions among men are so impetuous and deaf to admonition in youth? *He bath said in his heart, Tush, I shall never be cast down; there shall no harm happen unto me.*——What passions are so crafty and subtle in age?—*He sitteth lurking in the thievish corners of the streets, and privately in his lurking dens doth he murder the innocent: his eyes are set against the poor. He bath said in his heart, Tush, God bath forgotten, he hideth away his face, and he will never see it.*——*

Arise, O Lord God, and lift up thine hand; forget not the poor. What shall we say? Are they guiltless then, who would condemn to the rigour of the law those poor convicted sinners? Who would shut these doors in the face of the wretched kneeling wanderer?—Are they innocent who proclaim aloud and raise up their voice against her, and tell you and all her feeling and christian friends, that *she* ought not to be received, and that *she* cannot be reformed, *in whom* they have industriously, artfully, assiduously accomplished the dire work of ruin?—But those men are not of this character:—they are virtuous men; they are discreet men; they are men advanced in life; and if ever they have done amiss, they have long forsaken evil ways.—Let them recal then in a happy hour the sins of their youth, and never think they have sufficiently atoned for them: let them make reparation to the present generation of the miserable, for the injuries they have done to those who sleep in their untimely graves, to which they have been hurried by their sins and cruelty. —But perhaps these men are young, and know the objects of our charity to be past hope of reformation. Let them come here then and triumph barbarously, and behold the havoc their vices have made;—will they then cast the first stone at those convicted sinners, and add cruelty to their crimes? —Is this the reparation they make to their wrongs? —But, indeed, wherewithal shall they be able to
make

make reparation?—What shall atone for innocence betrayed?—What shall wash out the stains of pollution?—What shall restore peace to the broken heart?—Were they, like Zaccheus, to bestow half their goods here, they could not make restitution: yet what they bestow here for the great and good purposes of this charity, is all the restitution they can make.—Support it therefore bounteously; extend it widely; throw its hospitable doors open to all the miserable that wish to flee to it for shelter. Proclaim loudly that here you have set up a *city of refuge*, in which all may find safety, who *unawares* have sinned or have been betrayed:—that when the hour of sorrow and deep repentance comes (and come it will speedily) upon her you have ruined, she may not be precluded from this small resource.—That she may not be driven back in despair to avenge her wrongs on society, to avenge her wrongs on the rising hopes of your house, on the opening pride of your gallant boy, and entail from generation to generation a sad judgment on the fruit of your loins—Let her have free access to this hospitable harbour;—we will shelter her here from the storms of misery; we will calm the tempest of her wild resentment; we will mollify into tears her stubborn despair,—and having brought her abandoned and agitated thoughts to rest on the mercy of her Saviour;—we will teach her to forgive, as she hopes to be forgiven; we will pronounce in her ears his bland and healing words, *Neither do I condemn thee*; and

having fortified her mind by precepts of religion, and instructed her hands in good arts and industry;—we will raise up the debased mind to more elevated and better hopes, and we shall be able once more to set her in the right way with these words,—*Go, and sin no more.*

§ 3. We have thus seen, to how wonderful a degree, our Lord's tenderness hath been shewed to repenting sinners, and with what true benignity it hath been extended, even to sinners of a class the lowest and most desperate, that so he might comprehend within the limits of mercy, for our comfort, every lesser case of repented sin.—For women, the pure and holy depositories of all that is virtuous and lovely and excellent in human nature, if once they fall, become in a dire extreme the most abandoned and the most abhorred of sinners.

If our Lord reject not even these sinners when they repent, should we reject them?—But his actual conduct to them is well described in his prophetic character, *A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench.* He will not reject even the imperfect repentance of the lowest wretchedness which hath been trodden down and bruised in the ways of destruction: he will not extinguish even the faint smoke of the most feeble and transitory fuel, until he shall have fanned it into the flame of an acceptable sacrifice. Why do not all who call themselves Christians aspire to imitate

imitate their Lord in this beautiful and most amiable part of his character? Or why, when they have undertaken a good work, are they so soon disgusted at the frailty of sinners?—Why are they so soon *wearied of well doing*? When they have sowed good seed, why are they so impatient on account of the delay or the scantiness of the harvest? *For in due season they shall reap, if they faint not.*

The institution for which we plead this day, is thus treated contrary to the spirit of the Gospel: reproaches are cast upon its deficiency in good fruits. Enemies arise against it:—friends forsake it.—Behold, say they who planted this very fig tree,—*Behold these three years we come seeking fruit upon it and find none; cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? But the dresser of the vineyard answereth, Let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it, and if it bear fruit, well; if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down!*—Alas! feeble and wounded plant, perhaps we shall soon see thee cut down and cast forth from the vineyard.—The task of thy kind and indefatigable vinedresser is nearly done,—and she is hastening to render up to her Lord an account of her labours of love. She scorned not to cultivate the harsh and ungrateful soil in which thou art planted:—she did not disdain to bind up thy bruised branches, to train up thy feeble shoots, and to encourage the hopes of thy weak blossoms, too often swept from thee by
blasts

blasts and storms;—but she goes to render up her account, and her Lord has ready her long and well-earned wages.

§ 4. The demands of the public are truly too high on this institution. It is considered as the sure pledge of reformation and effectual change of life, when a woman once enters these walls.—I wish the truth of these expectations were possible to be proved without a single exception: but neither the nature of its object, nor human nature, admits the accomplishment of such sanguine hopes. Such hopes and such expectations must be lowered and reduced to more probable limits; and we must learn to consider this house as an asylum, not for repentance already accomplished and fruitful, but for misery which leads to such repentance;—not in its ends absolute and coercive, but conditional, and restorative; not as compelling true penitence, industry, and reformation, but as enlightening the dark mind with the truths of religion; as opening the eyes of profound and sleeping ignorance; as instructing in arts, and forming habits of industry; as removing the necessity of sin by those good arts and habits, and as laying a rational ground of the hope of reformation, if any just sentiment exist or can be kindled in the mind.

The principles on which this institution are founded must stand whilst christianity and humanity last on earth,—that is, to the end of time.—May the period of this institution be coeval with
that!

that!—*For it needs must be that offences come*, whilst mankind are sinners; and close on the heels of sin follow misery and repentance.——Whither then shall the wretched female fly to hide her sorrows and her shame?——In these kingdoms I know but two houses of safety and peace for her, one in the metropolis of each, in which a woman may return from *vice* to *virtue*;—but oh! *how many!* *how various!* are the habitations of sin and seduction over the whole land,—where innocence and virtue are ensnared, are intoxicated, and pushed by violence headlong down the precipices of destruction?——And shall the voice of all men be raised against this house of repentance, *because only* they do not see its fruits, or because perhaps they do not well consider the value of salvation to body and soul?——Yet hither, to these very walls flock the lost females of every country within reach of it, of every religious description.—We reject none, so far as your bounty allows our charity to extend;—whether they come from the distant provinces of our own country, from the shores of England, or from the countries beyond the Atlantic. And I am before you one witness of this christian and extensive liberality.

That you do not see the fruits of this institution, we are ready to confess. The nature of it does not permit its good effects to be made public. The tranquil employment of industry, instruction, and
re-

repentance, that fills up the hours within these walls, can of necessity be known only to a few. And when the penitent is again sent forth to navigate her bark in those dangerous seas, where she had already been almost devoured,—she is instructed above all to keep her own dangerous secret: And they who do best are least known to have ever been the objects of your bounty.

If, among the various objects of this charity some have relapsed, they are the smaller number; neither will it be pronounced that even they received no benefit by your goodness.—Shall we not esteem it some benefit, to have enlightened their dark and profound ignorance—and to have laid the foundation for even a late repentance, when being a second time involved in sin, they shall a second time inevitably receive its bitter wages?—Shall we not esteem it some good, though we have not reclaimed, that we have given a check to the sins of the most abandoned, and turned their thoughts into a channel which their education had never opened; a channel wherein the consequences of their relapse will oblige them again to flow?—The harvest is late and scanty, and some of our labours are blighted, but we will not despise it. We aimed indeed to restore a good member to society, and a soul to salvation.—God's mercy, with which all things are possible, will not suffer all our endeavours to be in vain. *The word of the Lord (saith the Prophet) that goeth forth out of his*
mouth

mouth shall not return void, but shall accomplish that which he pleaseth, and prosper in the thing whereto he hath sent it.

§ 5. Our institution, therefore, will in every view be found laudable and christian, and will merit justly your most liberal support, with whatever partial events it may be attended.

Ask me not, therefore, *Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine?* Or if you will ask this question, ask it in the spirit of him that made it—to curb and check the sinner, not to abandon her; and then, like your Lord, continue still to do good, and to cleanse the leper. I could answer in the words of our Lord, go and learn the meaning of these words: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*—I could even answer in numbers more than just expectation could imagine. But the accounts are yearly published, and I will not here detain you by a cold commercial statement of the balance of loss and gain, in an estimate of the salvation of souls.

I wish I could say the medicines we administer were infallible, and that in this hospital for souls, where we admit only repenting females, who are called *incurable*—I wish I could say we miraculously heal all!—Does any human institution arrive at this perfection of success? And shall we, since we confess this does not go to such extent—shall we turn forth upon our streets those incurables, as they are pronounced, and leave them to their deplorable condition, along with all the aggravation
of

of poverty, disease, and despair? Will you sternly shut out the forlorn wanderer who now beats her breast at our door, and washes its threshold with her tears? Will you scrutinise into the motives of her supplication with a severity which would shut *us all* out even from the hope of Heaven? Do you require, in order to secure her restoration, that her repentance should originate (as perhaps it ought) alone from the heart, and from a just abhorrence of her sins? And would you exclude all whom the sad consequences of their sins drive to repentance and this asylum? Let us not expect too much from human nature, especially when reduced to a state of debasement. The Author of our being, who *knoweth whereof we are made*, has thought fit to compel us to our duty sometimes by seasonable severity. It is perhaps more necessary when depravity is joined with ignorance. God, in his mercy, doth often fling into the cup of intemperance and sensual pleasure, fore afflictions, and pain and disease, to purify and cleanse the sinner from his vileness. These are his bitter and wholesome medicines; let us not counteract their operation in the case of these poor prodigals; nor refuse to relieve the external evil of which only perhaps they may be sensible, but which alone brings on a course of true repentance, ending in restoration to society, and spiritual health.

Prosperous guilt supplicates not our aid; it is insolent and presumptuous; it is full of delicacy and difficulty, as to the *convenient* terms of repentance;

ance; makes distant and irresolute inquiries concerning the nature of accommodations and circumstances—(I speak from experience). And when we exhort to speedy repentance, and *reason of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come*, they *tremble indeed*, as Felix did before the apostle whose words we recite; but with Felix they answer us, *Go thy way for this time, and at a more convenient season I will call for thee.*

No, we seldom behold sin and prosperity together implore admission here. They proceed too often to fill up the full measure of iniquity, even as far as the dismal close of life. If they be called away, having lived past the flower of short youth, they go then to answer, not for their own sins alone—but O! accumulated horror! for the ruin of many an innocent! the wages of whose perdition have to them stood in the place of honest industry, to purchase the gaudy toys of this world, and to sink the soul to eternity.

Not so the desolate and abandoned, but, in my mind, the more favoured sinner, who is visited with God's fore judgments—she flies to us from the keen scourge of their lash; she implores our *instant* protection; and we receive her, and heal her body and soul.

But, indeed, what prosperous sinner of any description thinks of his state, or will bear to hear of his soul's danger? How then can he be induced to swallow the nauseous, but wholesome medicines
of

of repentance? Who will bear to change his sweet luxuries, and the beloved sins *that do so easily beset him*, for the rigid discipline of temperance, sobriety and chastity, before racking tortures fasten him down to his bed, and threaten him with instant death. No! A few crude and abortive resolutions, in the moments of compunction or disgust, during some alarm, when pricked by disappointment and shame, make up his *mighty purposes* of amendment. And all these are suddenly obliterated by the return of society, of appetite, of temptation.

But these poor prodigals, driven under the shelter of this roof by famine and degradation, from *druff and husks*, are glad to be admitted even as *hired servants*, obedient to all the laws that lead to *true repentance* and salvation. And thus do they make their cry unto God and you, in the sublime images of the penitent psalmist, which apply to their miserable condition, without exaggeration. — *Be merciful unto me, O God, for man goeth about to devour me. Mine enemies are daily at hand to swallow me up. They hold together, and keep themselves close, and mark my steps, when they lay wait for my soul. (Ps. lvi.) My heart is disquieted within me, and the fear of death is fallen upon me. Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me. — And I said, O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I flee away and be at rest. I would make haste to escape. Lo! then I would get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness.*

wildernefs. (Pf. lv.) *Turn thee, O Lord, and deliver my foul, O fave me for thy mercies fake. I am weary of my groaning, every night I wafh my bed and water my couch with my tears. My beauty is gone for very heavinefs, and worn away because of all mine enemies.*

(Pf. vi.) *For my life is waxen old with heavinefs, and my years with mourning. My ftrenth faileth me, and my bones are consumed. I became a reproof among all mine enemies, but efpecially among my neighbours; and they of mine acquaintance were afraid of me, and they that did fee me without conveyed themfelves from me. I am clean forgotten, as the dead out of mind. I am become like a broken vefTel. For I have heard the blafphemy of the multitude, and fear is on every fide, while they confpire together againft me, and take their counfel to take away my life. (Pf. xxxi.) O deliver me from the wicked doers, and fave me from the blood-thirfty men. (Pf. lix.) Lefl they devour my foul like a lion, and tear it in pieces, when there is none to help. (Pf. vii.)*

But you are not deaf to the voice of their humble petition. You open your hofpitable doors and fhelter and defend them; you open your bountiful hand and feed them. You feed them with the bread of life, and with the meat which perifheth not. You open wells of living waters to their thirfty fouls. *They are as the birds, efaped from the fowler, the fnare is broken, and they are delivered.*

At their firft reception here, fcarcely affured of their efcape, they flutter and pant. Terror and

Doubt still hang over them, they imagine themselves still surrounded by dangers, they seem still to feel upon them the gripe of the spoiler, and still to be pursued by the *murderer*, the *enemy*, and the *avenger*. Their sunk and haggard eyes express only suspicion and dismay. They are at first, in all their looks, but the horrid phantom of some murdered and risted innocent. The troubled spirit of some once beloved child, barbarously mutilated and destroyed, whose apparition, emerging suddenly from the sepulchre of infamy, would blast the sight of her mourning parents, or sweep their grey hairs quick into the grave !

But, in a few weeks, what a change is wrought ? Health and tranquillity are recovered ; decency, repentance, and hope, begin to appear. Nay even affrighted modesty is not alarmed at visiting the cheek she had long abandoned ; and, instead of the forced laugh of sin, genuine smiles have been seen, where they had not been known since innocence was lost. Industry and religion, and true repentance, grow apace, and the prostrate mind is again raised up by the dignified purpose, by the christian hope, and by the pious, steady resolution, of a new and virtuous life. And then we send the repenting sinner forth, soothed, confirmed, and armed with her Saviour's words, **GO AND SIN NO MORE.**

If in the human breast there dwell any sensibility alive to human woes : if there be, among the

strings of the heart, a single well tuned chord, that vibrates with the kind impulses of sympathy to the sorrows, or to the happiness of our fellow-creatures, we must rejoice at this change, we must rejoice at this blessed change, that lifteth the sinner from the depths of wretchedness and despair, and placeth her feet on those *hills from whence cometh her help*. On those blest elevations that cheer with fair and opening prospects, and sooth the sick mind with christian hope.

§ 6. Do not suppose, in the various illustrations I have made on this subject, that I have sought to wind up your imaginations, or to wring your kind feelings by unjustifiable exaggeration. The relief afforded by your timely assistance goes far beyond my power to represent; for the sad reality of woe from which these penitents have been rescued, admits, alas! of no colouring deeper than the truth. I labour only to open your eyes upon the truth, and to render you capable of perceiving it. The guilty and the miserable will bear witness that *I do not*, that I *cannot* exaggerate. You, I know, can hardly conceive this, because you have not learned the sad lesson through your own experience.

Among the heaviest of the evils which the lost female sustains, there is (for so I must call it) a *ferocious cruelty* exercised against her beyond the example of what is inflicted on any other species of guilt or misery. Misery, of every other sort,

meets at least with compassion: nay guilt itself, when punishment overtakes it, often beguiles the kind heart of a tear. But all look with scorn and abhorrence upon the abandoned female, and her cup of woe is not qualified by a *single drop* of pity. Men become familiarized to her sad condition, and harden their hearts against her: they scoff, and seem to take even a barbarous pleasure in her sufferings. — *There, there, so would we have it, persecute and take her, for there is none to deliver her.* Nay those men, who are the very *accomplices and causes* of her shame and sin, are her devourers, and most cruel persecutors. But the virtuous part of that softer sex, which she disgraces, doth not even *know* of her misery.

Human nature feels but very imperfectly and faintly for that misery of which itself hath not tasted. Yet is not the reality or extreme thereof lessened on that account; nay, it is much aggravated, by the want of that sympathy which is most healing to human afflictions.

The prosperous and the happy, who never knew poverty and sorrow, are obliged to use strong efforts, if they would conceive what are their effects; and with difficulty can they understand the force of our descriptions. Innocence and purity are still farther removed from conceiving the horrors of guilt and sin, and the feeble portraits of them represented on our canvas, afford but faint ideas of the *living deformity*. Yet are these descriptions,

descriptions, and these imperfect sketches, all that may with propriety be presented before such a congregation, of which the great majority always consists of that *prosperous class*; and, (look around you,) in tenfold proportion of that *delicate sex*, whose happy and pure minds know of such wretchedness through no other inlet. So true is it, that innocence, like Heaven, aboundeth in mercy.—Far, far is it removed from your imagination to conceive, that even whilst you prolong the night in joy and festivity, with all the appliances that splendour and elegance can bestow, that on the cold marble of your threshold is cast the ruined female, who, steeped in misery, and broken with vain remorse, hath been cast out to weeping and gnashing of teeth. You sleep out the long morning on beds of down, after the fatigues of society and its varied pleasures. But she, poor wretch, like a nightly impurity, is swept early from your cold threshold. The returning light, which blesteth the creation at large, is to her only the publisher of more intolerable shame and scorn; she flies from her broken slumbers, and from terror and insult, to beg admission within this only safe retreat. And great is God's mercy to her, in his severe but wholesome chastisement, and even in his heavy judgments, which drive her, in a happy hour, to seek shelter with us—if possibly we can give her shelter.

§ 7. Six suppliant, even at this instant, labouring under all the variety of complicated wretchedness, wait, (and some have long waited) like the impotent man at the healing pool of Bethesda, which an angel visited; *but whilst they are coming another steppeth down before them.* God hath given to your hands and hearts the power of the healing angel, when you visit these regenerating waters, and him you imitate; they who enter here all experience the effects of your goodness. But I would have you go farther, and imitate the higher example of your Lord's unbounded goodness; who healed the impotent, that *had no man to put him into the pool.* None indeed were ever disappointed of relief, whose misery came before him. Let none be excluded, therefore, who come before you; your word or touch can also heal by the grace of God. For such is the power he hath committed to wealth and benevolence, and great is the reward he hath annexed to the proper exercise of his blessed gift.

Were I to relate the sad tale of each of the six suppliant who beg admission in vain into this place of restoration, I should, in every instance, move you to commiserate their situation; I think I should move you to relieve them. I shall venture, therefore, to give you the outline of their cases, in the order of their application.

But

But how shall I proceed?—In the very *first* instance, (which I recollect was an application, some months since, from a person high in our courts and senate) the history of the ruined female is built upon circumstances of such unexampled horror as do not admit of relation. On this case I must therefore close my lips; it is not for this place, or for your ears.

The *next* is of tender age, a very child, a blossom destroyed, the fair hope of the year blasted. She is preserved from second ruin by the pious care, and at the expence of an excellent clergyman, a curate in this city. He has long been anxious to have her sheltered here.

For the *next*, her dishonoured father himself submits to implore your protection, struggling against the shame with which his froward daughter has covered him.—A rare instance of paternal forgiveness.

The *fourth* has lately been discharged from one of your hospitals; and, whilst she *watches the troubling of these waters*, she has subsisted on precarious alms (for there is for her no employment of honest industry), and at night has sheltered her misery in a waste house in the suburbs of the city. To her in truth *a famine is in the land, and no man giveth to the poor prodigal*; she hath confessed her unworthiness to us, but hath found here no kind father with *the robe and fatted calf*. Do not question that she holds in deep abhorrence her former

sin: the smart of its punishment still pains her, *you* might have seen her tears as *I* have. You might have heard from her own lips the extremes of hunger, cold, and nakedness, she hath endured in detestation of it. She fleeth even to the *waste* wilderness from the ungodly and the sinners: but there the *Devil meeteth her* with the irresistible *temptation* of necessity, and *giveth bread to her when she is an hungred*. No irregular passions which aid the deceits of the cruel seducer impose on her now. She must become the servant of sin, with her eyes opened wide upon all its vileness and horrors. She must sink her soul and body's salvation to purchase the prolongation of a vile existence; and, O dire necessity! must obtain her *daily bread*, not by the *blessing of Heaven*, but as the *accursed bribe* of Satan, and as the *wages of perdition*.

The *fifth*, not yet dismissed from your hospitals, implores protection before she shall be driven to such extremes. But why should I plead for her—her own petition will do her more justice. It is this, presented to an eminent and worthy prelate, who gave it me to procure her admission here.—In vain—the house is full,

TO THE

*Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of, the
case of, humbly set forth.*

MY LORD,

“ I in an unguarded hour eloped from an indulgent mother, and thereby my youth lay exposed to the vices of the age, and hurried my unthinking years into the fatal consequences attending a life of sin and folly. Since I have entered into this house, I have had leisure time to reflect on my past misconduct, and much lament the time I have mispent; but intend, through the assisting grace of my God, to endeavour to redeem the time past.

“ Now, my lord, what I would be willing to embrace, would be to try for admittance into the asylum for unhappy repenting females; if that could not be done, I would with pleasure engage in any laborious work my constitution or abilities would be capable of, to earn an honest living.

“ I hope, from your lordship's humanity, that you will think of some method to help a returning prodigal, and I, my lord, as in duty bound,

Will ever pray.

——.”

The

The *sixth* made her application to the excellent lady who presides over this charity. She referred her, and enclosed her letter, to me. After long hesitation, sitting on the steps of my door, (for I saw her there) the woman herself delivered it to me with tears. I read it, but had no hope to give her. The bridegroom had gone into his chamber, and the door was shut, and five other *foolish virgins* were excluded along with her, nay were to enter before her if room could yet be found. However, I desired her to call again—*for I thought on your bounty.*

You shall hear the woman's letter.

March 15, 1791,

TO THE

Right Hon. Lady Arbella Denny,

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LADYSHIP,

“ Relying on that benevolence, which you so universally extend to the unfortunate part of the creation, I have dared to petition your protection, and that you will, in your manifold goodness, allow me a place in the Magdalen Asylum, where I may, with true repentance, expiate for past offences, and wash myself clean of those sins that oppress my contrite heart, and have weakened

weakened my constitution.---My errors, I acknowledge, have been great, but they were the result of inexperience and distress, rather than vice. Smooth is the descent from virtue, and unless we are stopt short in the way, I fear eternal ruin will be the goal that will terminate my race, and that of many others, in the path of infamy.

“ As my family is above the common class, they will not own me ; and the death of Mrs. —, (who was my god-mother) has deprived me of every earthly succour. I am willing to go to service, but no one will receive me without a character, and that, alas ! I have forfeited, unless by your Ladyship’s interference, I am enabled to recover my lost fame, and become a worthy member of society here, and by my future penitence and trust in God, be in some degree a partaker of that crown of bliss, which is already prepared for your ladyship.

I am, your ladyship’s humble

petitioner, and obedient servant,

—————.”

What answer shall I give ; for I have appointed the writer of this letter to call again on me tomorrow?---What are your orders?---How do you instruct me to speak to this *foolish virgin*, and
to

to the other *five*, who now trim their lamps without and *weep*?

Are we to keep rigidly to the narrow limits of our hospitality; and receive only thirty penitents? Are we forbidden to save more than thirty at one time, and to desire the rest to despair and die?--- No! no, your benevolent and christian hearts suggest to you at this instant far other counsel. Listen to the blessed spirit within. *For God worketh in you to will and to do according to his good pleasure.* Compare not the value of the salvation of souls with sordid Mammon. *Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.*

These foolish virgins, an ill-advised and numerous crew, in full pride and with swelling sails, a few months ago launched out together their frail vessels on the tide of life: they were bound on a voyage of pleasure, a short excursion, as they thought, to the port of happiness. A storm arose sudden and unexpected, their gaudy and useless tackle was shivered in the blast; they drove on rocks and faithless quicksands, their frail and ill-starred vessel soon foundered among them, and all had nearly perished---When *thirty*, more fortunate than the rest, found means to commit themselves to a staunch but small bark, hardly containing more, *thirty-one* had nearly sunk it,--- They bore away from their perishing companions, scantily provided indeed, yet hoping in the midst of terrors, and not far from the port of peace.---

But,

But, lo! six more wretches appear on the waves, and just emerging from perdition, make towards them with struggling despair; they grapple and cry for mercy. Will you thrust them down, and barbarously sink them never to rise again? Or rather, like those glorious fleets which, guarded by the blessed providence of heaven, and steered by the hand of wisdom, ride steady in the storm of life, will you not spread your swift wings to fly to their aid, and save them in the hour of danger from the devouring deep? O! lift up their sinking heads, place them secure on your lofty and faithful timbers, and carry them to the *haven where they would be*, and to which, alas! they knew not the *course*. Look not each upon your neighbour whilst they perish; lest the moment of salvation pass for ever. Stretch forth each your liberal hand, and spare not. Remember, a soul may be saved by the individual exertions of each on this very day.

§ 8. Permit me to detain you yet for a few moments, and I have done. We come before you this day with no common claim; we come before you with a claim peculiar to this institution alone. Do other charities call upon your religion?---So do we. Do other charities call upon your interests, upon your humanity, upon your generosity?---So do we. *We do more.*---We call aloud upon your *justice*. The crimes of men, their falsehood, their subtilty, their cruelty, have
brought

brought these penitents now before you, sad and weeping suppliants. Atone for your sins. If any man be conscious of perfect innocence, and that he owes nothing to this charity, let him close his hand, and shut up his cold heart. He owes no *justice* to these unfortunates, and therefore let him shew no *mercy*. But who is innocent?—*He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone at her.* No, this will be no proof of innocence.--- Cruelty is no proof. Innocence is gentle, feeling, liberal, full of charity. And for this I appeal to that soft sex who alone owe no justice to the guilty here; upon whom they have no just demand. I call upon the chaste matron and the pure virgin to look with meek-eyed mercy, and to relieve with liberal hand the intolerable misery and degradation for which they must feel such a refined sensibility. Do not apprehend a stain to the whiteness of your name, when you are called the *friends of publicans and sinners*. Remember your Lord's example, and remember that he said, the *holy angels in heaven* condescend to regard and to rejoice in one sinner that repenteth.

But would you form a judgment how on earth such conduct is received? Look around you, upon those who avowedly govern and protect this charity. Are they less excellent or less respected in society for their blessed labours? Look upon her that hath, in a long life, according to her Lord's command, *let her light so shine before men*
that

that they may see her good works, and glorify their father which is in heaven. Its venerable flame is now indeed feeble and faint, it sinketh and glimmereth on the verge of eternity. But there it shall be re-lumined with encreased and everlasting glory. Fear not, therefore, to tread in her steps, *for the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

§ 9. But I will cease to solicit that liberal charity of which I can entertain no doubt—I speak to those whose bounty we have already experienced, the lasting and living monuments of which we behold around us. I recollect that I plead in a city, of which the unprecedented works of charity are the astonishment and instruction of its neighbours; the splendor of which holds out an illustrious light to nations, and illuminates the ocean around our island. I rejoice with honest pride in this true *true glory* of my native land; and I indulge a *hope* that our institution shall not become an exception to your unheard-of generosity. But when I behold collected, as it were into one *focus* in this *little spot*, the scattered rays that have given life and vigor to so many christian establishments, from hope my expectations approach to assurance, that *we* shall also obtain a *full share* of your blessings. I behold within these walls the collected labourers of the Lord's vineyard, who have borne without repining the toil and fatigue of the day, exercised in relieving every
evil

evil incident to man. The protectors of weakness and infancy, the fathers of the fatherless, the consolation of the widow; God's almoners for the poor, his physicians for the sick, for the wounded, and the infirm; nay, those very persons who, imitating the good providence of God, endeavour to cut off the fountains of evil, even before the birth of man. And why should I not behold in them also the *imitators of their Saviour in mercy and compassion towards repenting sinners?* Charity never faileth, God's blessing ever supplieth the overflowing streams of this first of christian virtues. I know, therefore, we shall not be rejected; I know the purpose of your coming.---
Salvation is this day come to this house, because you, like your Lord, are come to seek and to save that which was lost.

I have done---I hesitate no longer to commit to your protection, not only the thirty-one penitents now before you, but also the six suppliants that implore admission into this peaceful family. But what do I say? Why should I circumscribe within these narrow limits the blessed effects of your charity. Your charity reacheth beyond the usual extent of human charity; not to this life alone, but to boundless eternity. And even now some of those once sheltered here, the happy departed spirits of penitents, saved through your protection, look down with blessings on the
 abundant

abundant liberality of this day, which lays the foundation for saving also *thousands yet unborn*.

Let your offerings, therefore, prove adequate to this great and extensive purpose: let them prove worthy your humanity: let them prove worthy your former liberality: let them add new lustre to the glory of your good works before men, and to the unexampled zeal of your charity. Let the offering of the pure and pious hands of the *softer* sex be in proportion to their horror of the unknown wretchedness we have faintly described, and the refined sensibility they feel for the deplorable condition of the lost female.---Let the offerings of the *men* be the unsparing sacrifice of *justice* and *atonement*. Let the offerings of all be according to your rank, your dignity, your birth, your wealth, and all those abundant blessings which God hath showered down upon your heads. Let them be worthy of those ten talents which he hath committed to your care, not for your selfish enjoyment, but to be communicated and multiplied.---But, *yes*, God *bath* committed them to you for your *own* enjoyment.---To *bless* and to *shew mercy*, is the most exalted enjoyment---it is the high enjoyment of the Deity himself.

Let your offering, in a word, prove worthy the religion you profess; let it prove worthy the example you imitate; let it prove worthy your own hopes of salvation, to which you can secure no title beyond that which you may purchase by

T

your

your present bounty. For being found merciful to penitent sinners here, you will bring before the awful tribunal of God, hereafter, the surest claim to his mercy towards your own manifold sins and transgressions, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

It would be ungrateful not to acknowledge the extraordinary liberality of the congregation, to whom this discourse was delivered. The chapel does not contain above 250 persons, and the sum collected in it, on the 3d of April, amounted to 304l. 2s. 7½d. In consequence of this collection, the governesses have been enabled to provide three additional beds.

SERMON XII.

On the DEATH of LADY ARBELLA DENNY.

REV. XIV. 13.

“ AND I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAYING
 “ UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE
 “ DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD FROM
 “ HENCEFORTH: YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT,
 “ THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LA-
 “ BOURS, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW
 “ THEM.”

IF death were not inevitable, or if our security in life were in proportion to our repugnance to leave it, we might spare our feelings, and not call our attention to this grand and awful subject. If even, knowing that we are to die, it were indifferent to us, when or how we die; if nothing could render the solemn visit of the king of terrors less dreadful—it would then also be our wisdom to shut our eyes against his unwelcome sight, and to stop our ears against the intrusion of his name, that so, come when he may, his power may reach no farther than to deprive us of our existence; but not to taint or disturb our enjoyments of life one moment before.

But of these suppositions none can be admitted. Our nature is not only subject to death inevitable,

but also to the fear of death ; and as it is impossible to escape the one, so would it be unwise, were it even in our power, to banish entirely the other. Because the fear of death teaches us how to combat and retard his approach—it teaches us to flee from the ambush he prepares for us in the seductions of intemperance and sensuality, and to avoid the destruction that bursts upon us, in the sudden explosions of violence and revenge. Under this salutary fear, we are induced wisely to lead a virtuous life ; for a virtuous life is generally a long life. And thus having, perhaps, to a good age baffled the assaults of our adversary, we yield him at the last but a small victory, and meet him with fortitude in the certain hope of a better life. Our fears of death are indeed the assurance that we shall die, but they tend to preserve our life, and should not therefore be rashly banished from our hearts. They should, on the contrary, be kept on the watch, like vigilant centinels posted far around us on every side, not only to alarm us on the actual approach of the enemy, but also by frequent signals to remind us, that in the field we have an enemy. Our fears inform us, that we hold our life only as a transitory possession from day to day, a necessary instinct which we should never oppose or neglect. But our hopes of life are derived from the same instinctive suggestions, and if one tell us the truth, so doth also the other. Among inferior animals we trace not those distant hopes or fears

fears which agitate the human breast ; because their destination is fulfilled in this life, beyond which they seem incapable of extending their thought : but as men are born both to death and immortality, so those anxious sentiments and long prospects seem naturally to arise from our peculiar condition.

Under these circumstances, it is evident it would be a disadvantage to human nature to be free from the fear of death. But it is perhaps as true, however extraordinary, that to be exempt from death itself, would not prove a benefit to man. Death, and all the terrors which surround him, the punishment imposed upon disobedient man by his Creator, like every other punishment from the same hand, finally changes its nature. The wise of all ages have been found to reconcile themselves to the grave, because there *the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.* (Job. iii. 17.) But it was reserved to the Gospel of Christ to discover to men the full extent of God's mercies in his visitation by death. Death is not reconciled to the Christian as a mere privation, which along with his enjoyments, uncertain and transitory as they are, relieves him also from his various and real miseries. No ; death is presented to him as a positive blessing ; it is not the loss but the true commencement of existence. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*

life. (John v. 24.) Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them. (Rev. xiv. 13.) To those whose pulse now beats high with the full tide of life, who have around them every pleasure and enjoyment, it will be difficult to prove, that the loss of life is not the most terrible of God's judgments. And if the world consisted only of this description of men, the benediction pronounced in our text upon those who die in the Lord would seem inexplicable. But when you reflect, that the vigorous life, and the enjoyments, which you now possess, are confined only to a portion of mankind: when you recollect how many in number are the miserable of all orders of men, to whom death is no terror; when you consider how short and uncertain are those very enjoyments of which you boast, and even life itself, *which fleeth as a shadow, and never continueth in one stay, (Psal. xiv. 2.)* even you must be able to conceive something of the truth and consolation to be derived from the blessing in our text.

It is not only true, that *in the midst of life we are in death*, subject to be called away at every moment; but even in the course of life we suffer a thousand deaths. Those dear connexions, the bonds which unite our souls to this world, are broken off one by one, till the long survivor finds himself left at last bereaved and, as it were, alone—among a
 . younger

younger generation; whose manners, inclinations, and habits are unsuitable to his case: infirmities come on with age, all the desires, and all the enjoyments of life successively suffer death; and long before our last hour arrives, little remains for the triumph of the king of terrors himself, except to invert the glimmering lamp of life. In the most favourable circumstances such is the state, and the following is the extent of the earthly existence of man: *The days of our age are three-score years and ten, and though men be so strong, that they come to four-score years: yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow, so soon passeth it away, and we are gone.* (Ps. xc. 10.)

At this period of life, the wearied mortal ceases to look upon death with terror; the Christian even looks forward to his visitation as the happy change which shall bring him to eternal bliss. To us who now love and enjoy life, this period of old age approaches, when we also shall be content to lie down in the peaceful grave. If our prayers for long life be heard, this we know must be the condition. It is not therefore that death is terrible in mature age, or to him who has lived a good life;—but it seems terrible now to die—we are afraid only that he may call upon us too soon; that he may take us unprepared; that he may break off our dear delights, and separate us rudely from those we love. These are indeed his real terrors, and

they fall on the survivors heavier than on those he calls away.

Religion can alone supply us with fortitude equal to sustain these just terrors, and these heavy afflictions. Therefore to the precepts of religion should we conform our lives, that we may obtain its blessed promises in a happy death, and in those promises should we seek consolation for the loss of our departed friends,

The beautiful passage I have chosen for my text, abounds with this consolation. *Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, for they rest from their labours; not the rest of mere insensible sleep in the peaceful bed of their grave, but they rest from their labours in the blessed enjoyment of their eternal reward; for their works do follow them.*

We cannot, within these walls, forbear to apply this beautiful text, with all its consolation and all its hope, to the solemn and striking occasion which death has so lately presented us. Her example must be instructive, who, within the circle of your own society, and under your own eyes, hath followed so humbly her Lord's perfect example, and hath taught the Christian both how to live and how to die. After a long residence among us, in which the duration of her life was measured almost equally by her goodness as by her years, her course protracted, even beyond the expected term, as it were by heaven's blessing, for the benefit of those whose safety was connected with her life, her long

long labours of love, ended our excellent patroness, and our best friend has gone to receive her heavenly recompense. *We sorrow not for her like men without hope.* The change to her hath been from labour and pain, to rest and eternal happiness; her *works have followed her*, and have made, through Christ, her election sure. Yet will it afford us a melancholy consolation to dwell a moment upon her many virtues, to pay to her our last duties, and call on you to emulate her bright example.

Born to the good things of life, and placed in an elevated rank, she *used the world without abusing it*, and conferred on her noble family and connections more true honour than she derived from them. She engaged in society unseduced by its levities, and uncorrupted by its follies; her cheerfulness was that which proceeds from a sound and happy mind, a perennial spring of pure and fresh enjoyment which continued unimpaired by age and even infirmity. Her conversation was lively and innocent, untainted with the common place malice of remark and insinuation, it injured none, but diffused cheerful happiness through all the circle which enjoyed it. And they who were her most familiar friends can witness, by her example, that true religion is neither morose nor gloomy, and that social conversation doth not lose its life and spirit when deprived of the poisonous and false relish of slander.

Her

Her social talents were not the crude affectations of the present day, but the sound and mature fruit of the last age; they were polished, humane, affable, christian. But whilst she shewed the amiable effects of religion upon the manners in equal society, she did not forget herself, or seem to think that beyond the happy circle in which she moved it was unnecessary to extend her thoughts. She understood her duty and knew her connection with even the meanest of her brethren. She learned early the lesson which is so difficult to the great and happy, she learned the unusual lesson, to feel for the misery which she did not herself experience. The vigorous and warm benevolence of her heart extended its active assistance to the remote and desolate habitations of poverty and hunger. Helpless innocence, starving industry, and abandoned woe, every extreme of human wretchedness, from infancy to dying sin, experienced her timely and effectual aid, and learned to bless her name.

The infant foundlings exposed in your streets, for whose protection you erected and endowed a noble hospital, had all died by cruel want, even under your bounteous charity, had not she, with more than maternal care for the children of the public, discovered the villainous fraud, which hurried them to the grave. She analyzed the poisonous composition, which was given to the poor infants; instead of the wholesome milk you had ordered—it was a pitiful proportion of milk drenched with

with water, and whitened with earthy chalk, and sweetened, to deceive the taste, which destroyed the opening germ of existence. She restored to the infants their natural aliment, and preserved their lives. She watched their hireling nurses, she checked and she rewarded them; and as soon as the opening mind had learned the power of speech, she had the children taught arts, industry, and religion. And it was her delight to preside over their progress to the last hour her growing infirmities permitted her to visit them. They have lost in her more than a mother; let the infants bedew her ashes with pious tears. And hereafter, when they approach the hour of death, they will recollect and bless that name which first impressed on their minds the truths of eternal life, which *fed them with food convenient for them, and gave them meat which perisheth not.*

When vicious and unfeeling fashion had proscribed the manufactures of our own country, when vanity and luxury panted after the productions of the foreign loom, when the distant Indies, or courtly France, or the finished fabrick of England, could alone supply our women with raiment, such as they would condescend to wear; when they could hear, without compassion, the cries of the industrious poor, whose works they rejected, and from whose hands they plucked the bread to cast upon the shores of the golden Indies, or to enrich the foreign merchant; when fashion and
luxury

luxury were deaf to the prayers of the starving manufacturers and their dying families—fashion and luxury could not resist the influence of our departed saint. O! the potent voice of high-born virtue in a worthy cause! Remember her, you who lead the follies, and fashions, and vices of the day: you, who tempt the giddy multitude to evil, whose intemperate vanities they follow with headlong rashness—think what you have to answer for! who lead into temptation those you ought to lead to virtue; who give *instruction that teacheth to err*; who spread the tables of sensuality and debauch; who poison your own youth *with wine*, and your whole nation *with strong drink*; who make *a mock of sin*; who laugh at religion; who profane the Lord's sabbaths with intemperance, with deep games, and with ruin; who *say in your hearts* *tush, there is no God; he hideth away his face, and will never see it. When, lo, the eye of the Lord is in every place beholding the evil and the good; (Ps. liii.)* and when *he hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness. (Acts xvii. 31.)* *Work out then your salvation while it is yet day, the night cometh (the night of death) when no man can work. (John ix. 4.)*

You, who lead vain fashion, bend her pliant folly to some good direction; let her not always tend to evil and to excess. We have seen her once look amiable in all her caprice, when she submitted to the direction of our departed friend. She influenced fashion to discover genuine elegance in a
simple

simple garb. She added to female ornament, a sentiment which has been felt but once; it is a new sentiment in dress, and seldom used; it has therefore one qualification to recommend it—it is not the giddy joy of splendid and costly foppery; it is the pure self-approbation, which arises from employing the hands of the Industry that looks up with anxiety, to the veering weathercock of fashion for the bread he must eat; and it is the satisfaction, which arises from actually paying him the wages of his labour, and the price of the bread. How beautiful! (for we know fashion can make all things beautiful, and can add a higher lustre to good deeds) how beautiful did the gown of home made stuff appear, when assumed for such a purpose! At that time the silks of India, and the taste of France, had suffered if compared with our domestic manufacture. How cheap, how innocent was it then to vie in dress and variety, even with the lilies of the field, and to change in form and colour every hour! How happy was then the inventive fancy, and the forming hand of fashion, which could indulge all its playful and fantastic shapes with innocence, and free from pain; neither guilty of the reproach of squandering the resources of domestic wealth, nor of robbing the industrious and poor by debts abroad. But we have lost her who once did teach even giddy Fashion to scatter blessings over the wide extent of her dominion.

But why should we carry back your recollection to objects of her goodness which are distant in time, or remote perhaps from your knowledge? Why should we turn over the annals of her excellent goodness which are not generally known: her private charities; her secret benevolence; her habitual alms, long forgotten to herself, and known only to those whom she relieved, and to him *who seeth in secret and who shall reward her openly*---in whose book they are recorded for an everlasting testimony of her faith and works? No! these good works we will leave to him who hath seen them, and cannot forget---we will speak of those which press upon us through all our senses, which we see and feel at this instant. To her benevolence alone, to her christian zeal, to the single influence of one virtuous woman, under God, belongs all you behold around you; and to her account in heaven will be set down its blessings and its fruits. If misery and sorrow have ever found refuge and consolation here: if the abandoned prodigal, hunted from society---*and the prodigal for whom no fatted calf was prepared*, even when with tears and anguish she returned to her parents threshold, but who was cast forth to despair and die---if she have found refuge here: if dark ignorance have been here enlightened and instructed: if deep repentance have recovered here the way of life: if body and soul have been here rescued from dire disease and death---to her assiduous
tenderness,

tendernefs, and to her christian labours all are due. And thofe dying penitents, who have breathed here their laft petitions to the God of mercy, and have made with him their eternal peace, have already received our departed faint, and wafted her with fervent bleffings to the high feat prepared for her in the prefence of her Redeemer, where ſhe ſhall dwell in joy and peace for evermore.

She is now beyond the influence of our little exertions; but if the ſpirits of the juſt, made perfect, know aught of what we do, or intereſt themſelves in our good deeds, ſhe muſt delight to ſee you emulate the example ſhe has ſet before you, and to ſee you continue to earn eternal life by following the path ſhe hath walked in. Her laſt cares were for this inſtitution; it is her dying bequeſt to her benevolent and christian friends. I have heard her, and my feeble voice ſhall not be wanting to implore you, in the name of my patronefs and benefactor, who placed me here the advocate for her now orphan family of penitents; I will not fail to pay her excellent virtues my laſt tribute, and obey to the letter her pious will. But what do I ſay? *her will* ſhall I call it--- her will only, that I ſhould plead, and you ſhould hear, the cauſe of repentance, and the voice of ſorrow? O no! we have received a far higher command; his laſt teſtament, who died for finners, is, that we ſhould *love one another, that we*
ſhould

should visit the afflicted, that we should heal the broken-hearted.

For these most christian purposes, her pious hands, whom we have so recently lost, raised this temple to God, and dedicated to him the acceptable and perpetual sacrifice of the penitent heart. And yet behold the weakness and the calumny of our enemies, they say---*not one stone shall here be left upon another, that shall not be thrown down: (Matt. xxiv. 2.)* * They cry---*He will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: (Matt. xxvi. 31.)* The penitent shall be cast out to *weeping and gnashing of teeth.* They speak of this institution with unchristian jealousy; and, as Esau said of Jacob in his vengeance, so they cry against us---*behold the days of mourning come for my father, and then I will slay my brother: (Gen. xxvii. 41.)*

No, this charity cannot fall. It shall not fall, so long as we can draw from the Gospel of Christ precedents of mercy to repenting sinners. ---It shall not fall, so long as humanity shall be found in the hearts of our fellow citizens. But who will take our cause in hand? Where shall we find a woman like her we have lost---of rank and virtue, of zeal and knowledge, who will condescend to reform and to instruct; to watch

* It was thought by many, who were not friends to the Magdalen Charity, that it would no longer receive the protection of the public after the death of lady Arbella Denny.

the various changes of the vitiated mind; to encourage the despondent; to check the presumptuous; to calm the intemperate; to inspire a new heart and a new mind; to recal lost decency and dignity; and to raise up the debased soul, and restore it to the long-lost hopes of heaven? Alas! few are able *to take up their Saviour's heavy cross to follow him*, and to emulate her. She was, indeed, vigilant, unwearied. Her intelligence, comprehensive and active under her heaviest infirmities, pervaded and ruled the whole economy of this her favoured institution. She was the careful steward, the just accountant, the wise director. Her diligence even now adds to our forlorn condition; for, whilst she could act, other governors were unnecessary. She was the rewarder of the obedient, and the punisher of the froward; mild and steady; just and tender in all her government. *She suffered long and was kind; she was not easily provoked; she rejoiced not in iniquity, but rejoiced in the truth: bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things: (I. Cor. xiii. 7.)* She was christian charity itself personified. The attention of her latter days was solely devoted to this institution; she derived her peculiar care of it from the example and instructions of our Lord, who directs our chief attention to those who most want it, to *publicans and sinners*. She acted literally like him in our Lord's beautiful parable, *she left the ninety and*

nine sheep, and sought that which was gone astray, and rejoiced when she found it: (Matt. xviii. 13.)

Alas! we do not hope for such a patroness again. All the christian virtues do, indeed, abundantly adorn our excellent countrywomen; but how few unite with them her uncommon endowments—the zeal and strength of mind of a christian hero, joined with all the tenderness and delicacy which adorn the most amiable of her own sex.

But that various excellence, which we cannot obtain in one, we shall find diffused amongst a number; and those talents, which we find not frequent in one sex, will be obtained abundantly in the other---in that sex, which, being the cause of their ruin, owes them relief. Thus united labours, and united talents, will compensate to this institution in some measure for its mighty loss; with one additional advantage; that we shall not have to deplore again the desolation that is fallen now upon us.

You see before you thirty penitent females, standing in silent dismay, surrounded by all the pomp and apparel of death in this sacred temple, expecting to be sacrificed with barbarous solemnity on the pile of their deceased benefactress.

You see a new and singular sight in the circumstances of a christian institution: you behold this building ready to fall with sudden destruction, like the temple of the Philistines; the strong hand of death
has

has already overturned one of the two great pillars that support it, and if you be shaken also, ruin is inevitable.

But will you suffer destruction to fall upon us? Will you not uphold us? Is this the house of the idol Dagon, or is it not the temple of the blessed God, dedicated to his holy service by acceptable sacrifices---by repentance, and by the broken heart.

O! do not lightly abandon us, or rashly renounce your duty. Death hath, indeed, taken away our chief support, and she is gone to receive the reward of her long labours, the blessed effects of which have followed her. Death shall also visit us, and we shall also, one and all, be called to render up our account. And remember that eternal life, which is the reward of christian labour, is not promised to selfish indolence. Do not cast out into the wicked world these thirty penitents, before their soul's health is yet restored, or drive them to a certain relapse into guilt and sin; lest instead of returning to society, ready to atone for past errors, they become its more dreadful pest: lest, banished hence, *the dispossessed evil spirits take unto them seven spirits more wicked than themselves, and their last state become worse than the first:* (Luke, xi. 26.)

Beware, lest having put your hand to the plough, and looking back, you are not found fit for the kingdom of God.

O! hear not against this christian institution the dull objections and the stupid calumnies of the cold and unfeeling; they are ignorant of the mighty benefits conferred here on the fainting soul of the abandoned sinner: they know not the regeneration effected on the repenting mind: they know not what peace hath been here restored to the mind, desolated by the most gloomy terrors and despair: they know not the peace which religion can bestow, and the prospects of happiness it opens to the wanderer, whose hope on earth is lost: they know not those things, nor could they feel them if they knew: but they know the unworthy objects of your bounty, whose hour of repentance had not arrived when they were sheltered here---but it will arrive and speedily. From the number of these, our enemies calculate coldly the expences of those who may be restored to virtue. They estimate the value of souls by rules of arithmetic, and find the purchase dear. Sordid calculation! and sordid objections! Be this far from those who think wisely, not with the wisdom of this world. Not so did she think, who followed the example of her Lord, and founded this christian institution. Not so doth our heavenly father deal with us; his spirit *striveth with man*; he beareth with our infirmities; he is *long-suffering and merciful*: and yet of all his creatures *none doeth good, no not one*. I appeal to your own consciences. Can we then expect higher per-

2

fection

fection in our human institutions for repentance and reformation? When on this great theatre of sin and repentance, this wide world, no man's repentance arrives at its just degree; and when all relapse every hour; if within these walls some good may be done, if some evils be removed, if some misery be relieved, great indeed is the efficacy of your charity. But if even all this were doubtful, and if the great majority of the objects of this institution proved unworthy, (a supposition far different from the fact), the saving of a single soul from perdition would amply justify the utmost extent of your charity.

But we trust we have stronger ground on which to justify your charity---we have on record many proofs of its perfectly answering its most christian intention: we know of many actually living in respect and comfort, in virtue and religion, whom you have saved and sheltered here: we know of others, who have resigned their life to him that gave it, in all the hope of accepted repentance.

It is now near twenty-six years since you have supported this institution, under the administration of its pious founder---the respect due to her virtues could not alone have sustained it so long: it must have appeared in itself deserving of your protection---it is deserving of your protection---continue it therefore to us liberally; execute the will of our excellent and departed patroness:

obey the commands of your Lord, and entitle yourselves to his eternal blessing.---*Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy:* (Matt. v. 7.) Our next meeting will prove your mercy—the annual solicitation of your free bounty, which, with the ordinary collections weekly received here, makes our chief and almost only support, is fixed for next Sunday. On that day we shall discover your disposition towards us: I trust it will be merciful---I trust it will be liberal. The mode of its administration will afterwards be considered. But should you on that day withhold your accustomed bounty, we shall but too well understand your fatal resolution---this asylum is no more---our house is left unto us desolate---its destruction is come to a perpetual end---shame and sorrow no more shall find shelter here.

The frail and yet innocent virgin, wherever she dwells, or even she who is yet unborn, that shall hereafter hear the false vows of cruel men, and be deceived, will then indeed be perfectly undone. Ye miserable and forsaken, what will be your horror when you awake from the villainous delusion, and see no stay or hold to stop your instant fall down the deep precipice of despair. O! spare, even in your bitter anguish, the swelling imprecations that are bursting from your broken hearts, against those who could so easily have sustained for you this one secure retreat, but would not,

Throw

Throw open wide the gates of this devoted sanctuary ; not for hospitality, not to shelter the afflicted, but for desolation. Flee, ye penitents, from these dismal walls, wherein charity hath died with your beloved mistress. Weep rather *between the porch and the altar* ; deprecate the *wrath to come* ; weep not for her, *but for yourselves*, and for the *children* of misfortune. Your bread is consumed ; your cruise is exhausted. Here you may find protection no more. Go, go, and again take up your abode in houses of riot and sin, and pass again through the rapid and dire gradations of shame and ruin. And when short youth is blasted by loathsome disease ; and when destructive drugs, combating against its ravages, break down your constitution, and afflict you with infirmities which waste and extinguish the lamp of life, hasten, ere you die, to the still fresh and hallowed grave of your departed mistress---from that sanctuary you shall not perhaps be shut out---pay her the last tribute of your just and deep sorrows, bedew her ashes with your bitter tears, for in her loss you have lost all ; and let the remembrance of her exhortations awaken you to a late repentance, and to a hope of God's abundant mercy through his beloved Son. And as you cherish that hope, forbear, if possible, to charge on your former benefactors your complicated destruction.

But who can prevent the bitter curse of death,

or who can avert it from the head on which it falls deserved? O! trifle not, I conjure you, with sacred duties: learn to value the immortal soul of your neighbour above the Mammon of this transitory life, and above the insensible indolence of the selfish mind; that when your hour shall come, your fast-approaching hour, you may join that communion of saints in which your departed friend already expects you.---That you may be blessed in your death as she has been, and that *your works may also follow you to eternal glory.*

And now, O Lord, we most humbly beseech thee of thy goodness to comfort and succour all them who, in this transitory life, are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or other more dreadful adversity. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear, beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples that with them we may be partakers of eternal life. Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only mediator and advocate: (Liturgy.) Amen,

SERMON XIII.

PREACHED

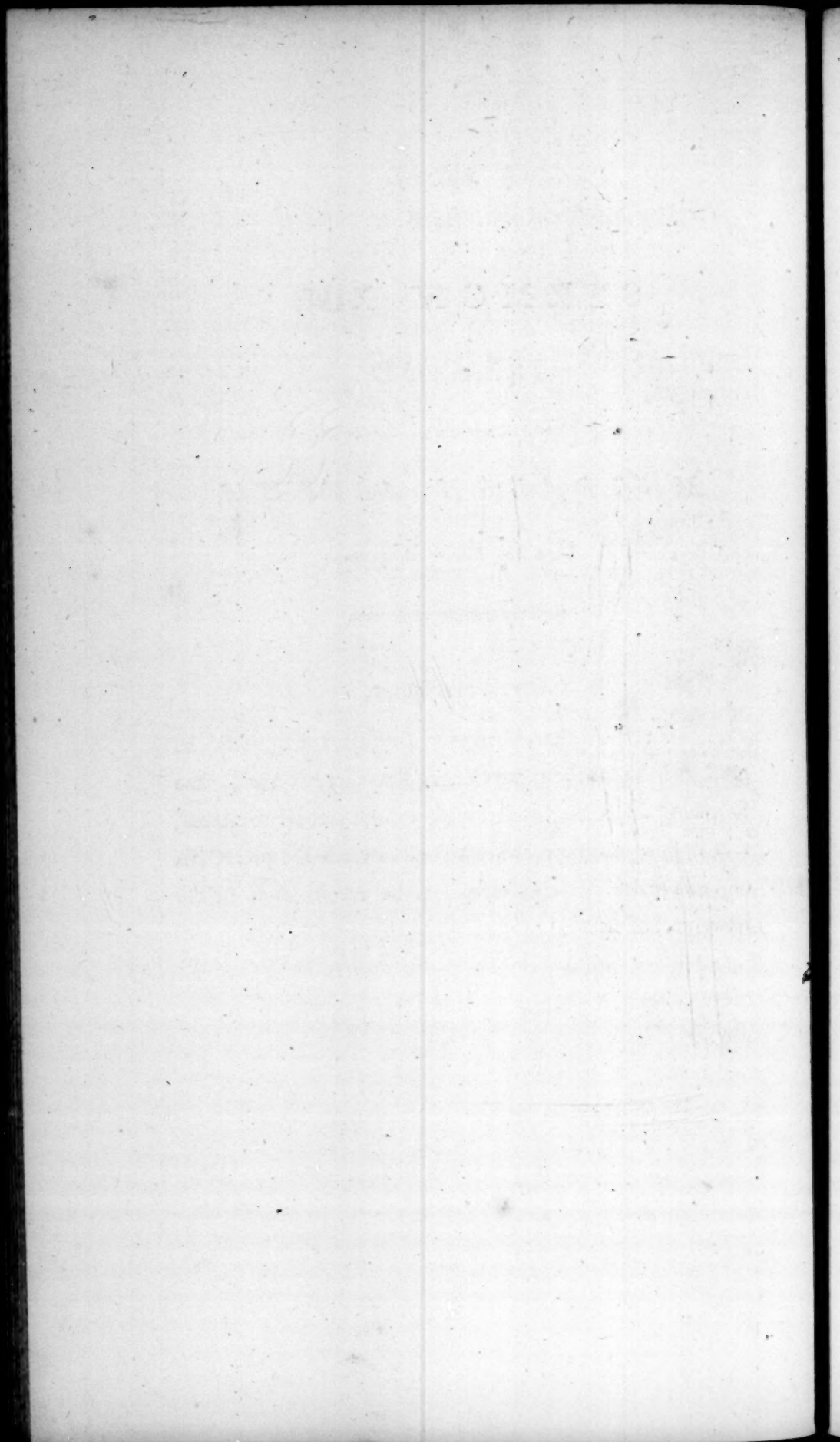
AT THE

MAGDALEN ASYLUM,

DUBLIN, 6th April, 1794.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Author, however sensible and grateful he must ever be for the extraordinary liberality, with which the following discourse was received, cannot forbear to lament, that nothing has been hitherto done towards the protection of those particular objects, whom he recommends in the latter part of it.



SERMON XIII.

LUKE xviii. 13.

*"AND THE PUBLICAN, STANDING AFAR OFF,
"WOULD NOT LIFT UP SO MUCH AS HIS
"EYES TO HEAVEN, BUT SMOTE UPON HIS
"BREAST, SAYING, GOD BE MERCIFUL TO
"ME A SINNER."*

TO enter the house of God with reverence, to approach his altar with humility, and to implore his merciful indulgence for our manifold transgressions, is the duty of his imperfect creatures. Conscience is placed in the breast of every man, to judge of his imperfections; and we must not, by any means, corrupt its decisions, or silence its reproaches, if we would escape condemnation in the sight of God. We are not entitled, the best among us, through our own innocence, to pass judgment upon others. We must not therefore *judge*, lest we *should be judged*: but, above all, we must forbear to impose on ourselves a belief of our own righteousness, by uncharitable comparisons with the sinfulness of our neighbours. Beware, therefore, this day, when we are led by our painful duty to speak in general of the mischiefs of
fin—

sin—beware of casting your eyes upwards*, or around, or abroad upon your neighbour—beware of marking out your neighbour as the object of God's vengeance from which you are safe. Dispositions of this nature are at all times injurious to us, and repulsive to that mercy which we all require, and especially when we stand in the more immediate presence of God, in his holy temple. In this temple, and on this occasion, such dispositions must be peculiarly injurious. The congregation here divides itself into two descriptions, the known sinners, and those whose sins are concealed, perhaps from every eye, except *His who searcheth the reins and the heart*. The publican standing afar off, *who lifteth not up so much as her eyes to Heaven, but smiteth on her breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner*—and, but I will not say *the pharisee*, for I trust there is not to be found among us this day one of that hard and unfeeling character; but, if any presumption of comparative excellence, when you look upon the poor publican, if any ideas of pride and protection are haughtily entertained by you, with regard to these unfortunates, suffer me to divest you of all such unworthy sentiments, which injure you in the presence of God, which prevent his acceptance of the offerings you are prepared to lay upon his altar, and which diminish their abundance; let me divest you of

* To the seat of the magdalens,

all such sentiments, and substitute christian charity in their stead. Presumption is cold and worldly. Charity is warm and bountiful. Presumption is offensive to God, and dangerous to yourselves.—Humble charity is the sacrifice in which he delighteth, which *covereth the multitude of your sins*, and bringeth down upon you the blessings of those *who are ready to perish*.

Assembled here in the solemn act of public worship, and for the express purpose of assisting to restore repenting sinners to God's favour, let us, whilst we deplore the miseries of *notorious* sin, profitably turn our eyes inwards upon ourselves, and examine seriously our own imperfections, as they must appear in the sight of God; so shall we become earnest to implore his mercy for ourselves, whilst our hearts shall be expanded in mercy to our neighbours.

God, who sees the secrets of all hearts, who knows the springs and motives of human actions, and who weighs in the balance of eternal justice the temptations against the sins of his creatures, judges not according to man's judgment. Among men, motives or temptations can hardly be estimated, and actions are the objects of their applause or condemnation. In the present state of human knowledge, actions being the surest test of the thoughts and motives, human laws are applied to them; but though the whole course of action leading to particular circumstances, may be, when
known,

known, very certain grounds for determination, partial actions may be very fallacious. But this is not all; some actions are punished, among men, with a severity far beyond their actual guilt in the sight of God, whilst that conduct which, before him is most iniquitous, not only escapes punishment among men, but even obtains something like favour and triumph. Injustice of this kind takes place among men, by the alteration of some external circumstances, which, before God, avail little to influence his righteous judgment. He will not condemn with rigour fallen innocence, and absolve triumphant villany which has betrayed it. He will not recompense the criminality of error by extreme punishment in one sex, and by approbation in the other: he will not pass rigorous sentence upon ignorance and poverty, and acquit, for the same crime, knowledge and wealth. Let us look into his sacred law, and we shall find a very different judgment. *That servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with MANY stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask more.* (Luke xii. 47.)

Since then this congregation is so divided, that we cannot in some degree avoid the comparison between the pharisee and the publican in the parable,

parable, let us, while we contemplate the distressing picture of the sins and misfortunes of these publicans, hold up also to our view a hasty sketch, a general outline of the errors and deformity of our own conduct, that we may thence derive some profitable instruction, which may tend to correct us, so that *we also* may go down justified in the sight of our Judge.

On your entrance into this holy temple, you may have preferred your address to God in the words or sentiments of the pharisee. *God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican: I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.* (Luke xviii. 12.) You may have considered yourselves as justified in the sight of God, by the liberality of your alms; you may have looked upon yourselves as the protectors of the unfortunate, as the judges of their deserts, assembled to hear their cause, and determined to regulate your support by what may appear on this day of trial, or by what may be advanced in their behalf by their feeble advocate. For your sake, my brethren; for their sake, I deprecate such dispositions: they indeed stand before you to be judged, but, remember, you stand before your God: if they, through my weakness, fail to find favour in your sight, beware lest they *go down justified before you in the sight of God.* To prevent this presumption, so dangerous to the two-fold good purpose of your assembling,

bling, your own acceptance before God, and your charity to your neighbour, look into your hearts, and judge yourselves, before you pass sentence on the poor publican, upon whose sins you may be inclined to elevate your own merits. Instead, therefore, of the words of the proud pharisee, offer up to Heaven this humbler address, in the words of the psalmist: *Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart; prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well, if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* (Ps. cxxxix. 23.)

Have none of the temptations of your situation in life overcome *you*? Have you combated each the predominant evil of your constitutions? Have you subdued your ruling passions, the *sin*, in the language of scripture, *that doth so easily beset you*? Or rather, whatever be your rank, whatever your age, whatever your sex, are you not obliged to acknowledge in your own conscience, your innumerable errors, and to plead guilty, and to cast yourselves upon the mercy of your Judge, and of your God?

Let avarice come forth, if avarice could have entered into this house of charity this day; and, *though he fast twice in the week*, let him recollect his ill-gotten gains; let him recollect whether he hath not ground the face of the poor, or plundered the widow; or whether, in another sphere, and under another character, he hath not ruined his neighbour,

bour, by the juggling of cards; or by the accursed die.

Let Ambition, if ambition may here be found among the great, recollect how often he has violated the laws of God and man, to obtain his vain object; let him look to the bribe by which he purchased the poor man's integrity, and to the perjury by which he endangered his soul.

Let Profligacy, Sensuality, and Levity, above all (should they have entered here, and sure they ought to enter here, if ever they have wished to atone for their sins); let them look to their own hearts, whilst they behold the victims of their barbarity. Away with their pride, and their presumption, here; away with their haughty and self-sufficient airs; away with their ideas of protection to suppliants: they are themselves the most wretched of suppliants, who ought to come here, not to protect, but to implore mercy; who ought to come here, not to give support, but to offer restitution. And is there a single man in this congregation who owes no restitution here? Who feels not himself subject to the charge of similar guilt with these poor publicans, whatever other sins and offences sting his conscience, and render him even more deeply, than they are, obnoxious to the wrath of God?

Nay, let not even that very sex, whose dignity their errors have offended most, be too much elated in their comparative purity, or presume

too much in the presence of God—thanking him that they are not as these publicans. Innocence, and genuine virtue, pass no severe judgments, nor give any over to reprobation; they are tender and compassionate to those misfortunes, of which they have never experienced the anguish; they pity that degradation, from which the blessing and the grace of God shall ever protect them. But innocence, and genuine virtue, are more rare among the sex, even in this favoured island, than they have been. The pestilential influence of corrupted manners has deposited its contagion among us; and so deeply, that the soundness of our constitutions, and the vigour of our health, have not entirely resisted its injuries. We hear now of a levity of conduct once unknown; we hear of infidelity to the marriage bed, and hear it patiently. Infidelity in religion, infidelity to the sacred engagements of mutual faith plighted at the altar, and polluted manners, are derived from the same corrupted source. The fatal poison of the foreign press has debased the high standard of the sterling excellence of our female character. The base alloy has sullied the brightness of their purity, and lowered it to the foreign currency. What female imagination has escaped the taint of this injury in her daily application to a foreign language, of which the ordinary productions, imported for common use, abound in the most vicious and prurient wantonness? And how shall female, and even
 infant

infant innocence escape contagion from the questionable characters (of the majority, I speak not of all) of those foreign hirelings, to whom the indolent mother commits the sacred duty, which, by every law of nature, is her own peculiar office.— If she be bound to nurse, upon her maternal bosom, the infant to which she has given life, how much more is she bound to feed it with the food of life, from the good treasure of her heart; to watch vigilantly over its opening propensities, to check, to soothe, to restrain, to direct; to guard the eye of innocence, and its ear from evil; to rear up the tender and blushing maiden beneath the shadow of her own maternal care, and to arm her, as it were, with the refined sensibility of that most delicate plant, which instinctively recoils from the very approach of danger! O when will maternal fondness be engaged in the delightful duty of educating her own fair offspring? When will the idle vanity of fashionable instruction in a foreign idiom yield its due turn to more profitable, and less dangerous studies? Let me not be charged with illiberal ideas on the subject of female education. I would open to their just instruction every volume of delightful science, and of elegant knowledge; but I would, as I revere the sacred sex, the depositaries of all the virtues of generations yet unborn, shut out from their too impatient and fatal curiosity, in the impenetrable darkness of unknown language, the evil volumes of infidelity and of pollution.

lution. Are we not corrupted, and deeply corrupted? Is the female character what it was, even in the last generation? Where are our boasted purity and virtue? Where is the proud renown of our chaste and sequestered island? If we be still better than our neighbours, how much do we fall short of our own domestic examples? Who, even among the sex, is qualified as well by the purity of her thoughts as of her conduct, (for this alone is purity in the sight of God) to *throw the first stone against* her convicted neighbour? Who, since all have a thousand sins to answer for, is at liberty to look like the proud pharisee upon these publicans. Shall men venture such presumption, whose offences are more flagrant in the same instances, and innumerable others? Shall women venture such presumption, because their situation, their rank, their respectability, exempt them from the temptations to which these unfortunates have fallen victims; or, it may be, cover them from that infamy to which these have been exposed; whilst they are conscious that their sins, and their hearts, lie open before God?

Let me then recommend to the protection of God, and your bountiful consideration, these humble and repenting sinners.

If God be abundant in mercy, and in consequence of their sufferings, and in consequence of their repentance, will, through Christ, make them white as snow, though their sins have been

been as scarlet—hesitate not to look up to your Lord and Saviour, for the perfect example which you are bound to follow; their sufferings alone, even without urging any circumstance of palliation for their conduct, render them objects of the highest commiseration; not of that selfish feeling which is shocked, and flies from the sight of misery like the priest and the levite, which turned away on the other side from their wounded and plundered countryman; but they are objects of that exalted benevolence which warmed the bosom of the generous Samaritan, which stimulated him to active and zealous charity, when he forgot the little resentments of his tribe, when he raised up the wounded Jew, poured oil and wine into his wounds, set him on his own beast, brought him to an inn, paid liberally for the care of him, and promised to come again and pay more as far as his necessities required—*Go thou and do likewise*, added our Lord and Saviour, to this beautiful parable, and thus defined the nature and true extent of christian charity. Shew the same compassion on these women, for their sufferings—forget the evil they have done in society, lay aside the just detestation of their former misconduct: behold they *have fallen among robbers*, they have been plundered of more than worldly substance, they have been *wounded and left half dead*, they have laboured under those dire symptoms, which not only hurry the body to the grave, but threaten the soul

with eternal death. And whilst they have languished, *priests* and *levites*, acquaintance and friends, have *passed them by on the other side*; nay, parental affection itself has turned away from them in horror. We drop the allegory, which faintly pictures their miseries, observing only how your charity keeps the perfect parallel of christian duty. *You have been the good Samaritans.*

X The misery of these penitents has indeed been extreme; but when we ask what enormity of excesses and misconduct brought it on them; we are surprized that consequences so fatal should attend errors of no unnatural or villainous complexion: we are surprized that the same sin should be in the eyes of men (for God judges with other judgment) to the one sex a jest or a barbarous triumph, to the other utter destruction: we are surprized that instead of finding a complication of guilt leading to such destruction; one single error—one single error, perhaps inevitable in some circumstances, perhaps capable of a thousand palliations in others, without the intention of a second error; nay, the unfortunate abhorring a second error, has been the cause of such destruction. And why? Because necessity, and not inclination, has obliged the ruined female, to add error to error, and sin to sin, till the measure of her wretchedness is compleat; because there is to the ruined female no retreat after the first false step, but being pushed as it were over a tremendous precipice, she
is

is dashed from cliff to cliff, at every shock bruised and mangled more horribly, till she reach the abyss of eternity, which yawns below; unless God miraculously dispatch some guardian angel, with healing on his wings, to snatch her up whilst yet she lives, and to place her firm feet once more in the paths of life. Should we not call this a surprising escape, should we not call this timely and wonderful salvation? It is no less wonderful than true, that the ruined female has sometimes thus escaped.

But what crimes have precipitated thus the ruined female—alas! innocence itself, and easy faith, which encouraged and completed the high triumph of the treacherous betrayer; and then he pushed her down headlong; but God has sent you quick to snatch her from the gulph below. Surprise, persuasion, hope, fear, violence, and any or all the causes of human errors and human misfortunes, might have wrought her fall; love itself might have wrought her fall. Powerful love, that irresistible and blind passion of maddening youth; that passion the universal bond of nature; that glorious and noble passion; that passion the high and imperious commands of which all animated nature obeys, obeys with willing homage; that passion which in man alone is exalted to the highest dignity; that passion which in man alone is debased by the foulest treachery and ingratitude. What human strength is equal to resist such a combined power of temptation? Not innocence, not purity

itself, not inexperience, not the easy and fond credulity of the enamoured maid; no! human strength is very weakness here; the grace of God alone supplies wisdom to ignorance, and power to feebleness here; the fear of him, and the love of his laws, can alone preserve the otherwise devoted victim of the cruel seducer. Religion alone can shield her from imminent destruction. But she perhaps had never been taught due reverence for God's sacred laws; she had perhaps never imbibed in her heart, from the sanctified instructions of a mother's lips, the perpetually distilling drops of heavenly precepts, which impress the marble, even of the untoward heart, and sink deep into the very soul; she had never been taught by the venerated authority of a father, the solemn obligation of the law of God, and she had never known from his lips, that the true dignity of female excellence is derived alone from religious purity, from which she who swerves loses at once the favour of God, and forfeits for ever even the love of ungrateful man. What a privation the want of such instructions was, you who have been blessed with them, who have followed them to your own happiness, can well estimate; or they can perhaps better tell whose misfortunes have taught them by a sad experience. Religion to them, if not utterly unknown, was disregarded; nay, if we except the happy few whose pious education has made upon their docile minds a just impression,

and

and operates upon their conduct with just effects; religion appeared rather to them, what it seems to appear to the gay world, a burthen and an interruption to the pleasures of life, and a morose restraint upon the inclinations; religion appeared, perhaps, like a medicine, which the healthful and the robust despise and nauseate; which they consider an useless drug, till the visitation of sickness teaches them its value, and obliges them to fly for relief to its potent virtue—*They, those poor publicans*, have found it now; but its operation had been more gentle, had it not been rejected till the last extremity. It is better to use religion as a mild antidote and a grateful cordial, than to delay its application until it becomes necessary to sooth the pangs of bitter repentance.

You, ye happy and ye great, whose high situation seems to exempt you altogether from the degradation of those miserable penitents, look not on them with the scorn and presumption of the pharisee; *be not highminded, but fear.* (Rom. xi. 20.) Religion and humble trust in God is as necessary for your security, as it was even for theirs; it is true you are not objects of that seduction which tears the deluded virgin from her mother's arms, and robs the father of his darling, and his pride. The highborn maid is not the quarry of the rapacious seducer; she soars far above his reach—the timid, the humble, the unprotected, are the objects of his pursuit—Always a coward and traitor,
he

he seeks those alone, and forbears to aim at that guarded and superior beauty and innocence, against which his arts would probably fail to succeed, and which should he spoil, he would be on the instant compelled to make reparation by legal bonds, which himself had sullied, or be sacrificed to the fury of a host of relatives, not patient of the deep dishonour.

But after all, though the great may parry this disgrace; without religion they cannot guard themselves from even more fatal dishonour. Seduction in high life makes direct addresses to the matron alone, and poisons only the mind of the daughter, preparatory to other expectations when she shall become a matron.

Seduction in higher life—but I cast a veil over the most melancholy reflections arising from this subject on which I have meditated, and on which I have written—I respect too much the feelings of this congregation, and their pious dispositions, to turn their attention too inquisitively upon the misconduct of the great world.

Ye matrons, guard your sacred purity by the protection of holy religion. Ye matrons of high and proud rank, it is against you, against your most precious honour, that levity, seduction, and profligacy, aim their polluted addresses. Would to God I could say in vain! New manners, new vices, new wickedness is daily imported; a change has taken place; is it for the better? Alas!

no;

no; all things change for the worse; the seduction of the virgin, which is attended with a thousand evils, has been changed for the seduction of the matron, attended with a thousand more, and fraught with more prodigious mischief; whither will the profligacy of men next direct its enormity? Even in that devoted country, which now suffers all the judgments of angry Heaven, the seduction of a virgin would, in the meridian of its splendor and its wickedness, have been deemed dangerous and rash. But what matron of rank was uncorrupted? was not the sacred bond of marriage there the signal for unbounded profligacy? And are we for ever to continue (even now beholding the dire consequences) the dupes of their levity, their abominations, their madness? Are we to follow that atrocious people throughout the whole course of their vices and their crimes, till we fill up the measure of iniquity, till we provoke and pull down on our heads, the whole weight of Heaven's vengeance, and involve our land in dire anarchy and blood? O resist strenuously the invasion of corrupted manners; resist it with more determined vigour, than the invasion of the sword; the sword is the lighter evil, it is the less deadly evil; the sword may send to a premature, but honourable death, a few—but corruption destroys thousands, uncalculable thousands. Corruption of manners prevents population, and leaves a rank desert of noxious weeds those fertile lands,
which

which might have produced an hundred fold—corruption of manners with cruel negative forbids the sacred bands of marriage—corruption stifles the loud voice of nature, imposing upon mankind sterility abhorrent from the grand ordinance of God. Those youthful and vigorous blossoms, the pride and the glory of your noble houses, which now expand blooming with promised generations of heroes and of beauty, drop off fruitless, when touched and tainted by the blight of corruption: your young men will not marry, they fear to marry: your beauteous and highborn virgins wither in your palaces, unsought and unwooed. It is not her own family alone, which the matron, careless of her fair fame, dishonours; it is not her own neglected children alone, not her own children alone misled by her example, whom she injures; she injures thousands. Her ill-conduct is a public libel on the honourable state of marriage; her incontinence is a public prohibition, it is an audacious repeal of that law of God, which ordains that a man, forsaking all other, shall hold to his wife so long as both of them shall live. Her example terrifies the man, who looks among the maidens of rank and fortune for a virtuous partner, unto whose keeping he may entrust, for life, his honour and all his earthly happiness. He fears dissipation, he is alarmed at extravagance, he shrinks from dishonour, and hopes to remain,—if all his days unwedded and unblest, all his days also

undisturbed and undishonoured.—What is the consequence? Though a man may be deterred from marriage, from that lawful and virtuous connection, which is the true bond and vital support of society; yet still, when religion is not heard, the imperious law of nature will be obeyed, at whatever expence and fatal consequence; and then behold the dangers of seduction to the whole circle of society. If the levity of the great deter men from forming lasting connections in their proper rank, they will seek among their inferiors such temporary connections as shall be equally injurious to all: women *may* keep separate, but men are the dangerous bonds of union between all classes, and therefore female virtue and female reformation is an object of the highest importance to all women, of whatever class. All nature is connected: the influence of the most abject is felt among the highest; and the good or evil example of the high, in its turn, descends upon the humble. The mists, which rise from the humble earth, form the lofty clouds, which drop fatness upon those regions that gave them birth: and the noxious vapours send back upon the devoted spot, from which they arise, the forked lightening, the sweeping desolation of the storm, and the deadly pestilence. Behold, therefore, ye great and ye humble, ye happy and ye miserable, in your mutual errors—mutual injuries. Those noxious vapours may arise from the lowest of the wretched, which shall taint and pollute

lute your happy abodes, and if you exercise upon them uncharitable vengeance, *you drive them to utter desperation.*

But let a commerce of a different nature prevail among you; soften and cool the agony of their despair, by the dew of your bounty—refresh, restore, and bless them—so shall you shine as the stars of heaven, unclouded and glorious: so shall you *go down justified* in the sight of your merciful Judge, and you be found worthy hereafter to inherit Heaven itself.

But why should I dwell upon topics of persuasion to this good work? Are you not already persuaded? Do not sufficient proofs of your charitable persuasion exist both here and abroad? I remember when it was necessary, in order to obtain for this institution a small share of the benevolent attention of the public, to strain every nerve, to leave nothing unsaid, and to call in the aid of the most powerful protection. I remember when this institution was esteemed hopeless and desperate; when in comparison with other charities, it seemed like its unhappy objects, forlorn and abandoned by all. I remember when all the influence of its most pious and excellent foundress was hardly sufficient to support and bear it onwards against the strong tide of popular opinion, and to sustain the head of the sinking sinner. But the strength of God assisted her weakness; the zeal of christian *charity, which hopeth all things, endureth all things; which*

which suffereth long and is kind—supported her in her arduous undertaking; her maternal bosom fostered the feeble offspring of her benevolent heart, she watched incessantly over its doubtful existence, and she cherished the spark into life, which had otherwise been extinguished; from the scoff which would have blown it out, it was sheltered by the reverence belonging to her name; and from the cold neglect of hard Mammon she covered it by the warm mantle of her frugal charity; and from all, who could feel, or discern, she won, for her favoured institution, a share of that respect, which belonged to the venerable dignity of her character, and to her *wisdom and gentleness, which were from above*. And Heaven spared her long for its own good purposes, compensating her pains of body, by a happy mind, and rewarding her, even here, by permitting her to behold the effects of her goodness, and to receive the blessings of those who were ready to perish. But she is gone to her eternal reward; to obtain that salvation prepared for those who convert sinners from the evil of their way, and save souls alive; and to inherit that mercy which is promised to the merciful.

Yet I remember well, that, even under such protection, it was difficult to maintain this charity, and almost impossible to extend it; I remember, when once my zeal (which when green and
weak,

weak, was supported, and educated, and inspired by her, till it is become bold enough to walk alone) I remember, that, when my zeal for this charity, engaged the public bounty to add six suppliants to the number usually sheltered here, it soon felt the narrow measure of its limits, and was quickly compelled to reduce to their original number the objects of your mercy. The small, but refreshing rivulet of your charity, which had, by the dew of your extraordinary bounty, spread for a season beyond its banks, and watered many a plant, hitherto scorched and fainting, was quickly obliged to withdraw from them its relief, and to retire again within its narrow channel. I have long seen and lamented the small and uncertain resources of our confined charity, which thus restrained its benefits and its blessings to an happier few. And whilst its farther extension, under the discountenance of the public, appeared a hopeless object, and whilst the *harvest of the unfortunate and repenting sinners was indeed plenteous, the labourers were few*—for their cause in this extensive city, nay in this whole kingdom, was heard, and pleaded only within these narrow walls, and committed almost solely to my feeble voice.

But the Lord of the harvest hath suffered himself to be entreated, and hath graciously sent forth labourers unto his harvest: (Mat. ix, 37.) and I behold, with delight, a new and surprizing appearance within

within the horizon of this city*. Charity, nay, charity towards the very forlorn objects of this institution, springing, under the blessing of heaven, from the united labours of his humble instruments, is seen to roll on like the river of God with increasing fullness; whilst it receives from the willing contributions of the great a copious and swelling tide. And the expectation of its blessed effects is like that which moves the whole land of Egypt, when the Nile having collected the tributary streams of the lofty mountains, and of the floating clouds of many a region, prepares to spread his fertilizing inundation over the whole kingdom.

Are ye prepared, ye great and lofty ones of this earth, to send your tribute year after year, with uniform blessing, on the thirsty and dying plants over your whole land? Or shall we not, perhaps, feel some alarm, lest this grand appearance should prove no more than the torrent, which with sudden inundation rushes down from the mountains, and obliterates the little rivulets which

* As the Lock Penitentiary, for penitent females, had been this year established under a splendid patronage, and on a great scale, it was feared, by the friends of the Magdalen Asylum, that it would be much injured by the new institution; but, to the honour of humanity, and of those ladies of the first rank, who had principally contributed to found the Penitentiary, the Magdalen Asylum was, on the day of this sermon, also most munificently supported by them in particular. The collection in the small chapel amounting to 333*l.* and upwards.

Y

have

have long distributed refreshment and verdure over the plains? Do not wash away by your rapid torrent our little stream of charity, keep on your own magnificent course, but leave us to do the will of our Lord as we have endeavoured for six and twenty years. For wherein does the new and magnificent charity excel ours? Only in its extent, not in its objects; only as the congregated and vast waters excel the little spring, not in quality or use, however in magnificence and abundance.

It has been stated and generally supposed, that our institution harbours the objects of its care for only a fixed term. But that supposition is erroneous, except in one sense. The fixed term for sheltering here the objects of your liberality is determined by their necessities alone; the moment they can be restored to friends, to parents, to their God; the moment they become skilled in honest industry, and useful members to society, be that period later or earlier, the term of their refuge here is then alone considered to have expired; or perhaps the expiration of their term, after a tedious illness here, restores them to their God. And the last woman who departed from this house, not into the uncertain reformation of a wicked world, but into the unalterable state of everlasting life, had, according to the statement on your books, tasted of your bounty, and blessed your liberal hands, and learned Christ, during four years and twenty-eight days.

Your

Your Charity appears more excellent than ours, only because it is dressed in the new and glossy garment of fashion. And the advantages of your charity above ours, not to delay you by minute detail, consist chiefly in the hopes of its permanency from its numerous protectors, and in the extent which it derives from its copious resources. The life of any individual, however exemplary and however long, is, as we have seen, but too short for the exigencies of the successive generations of the miserable: to the equal and uniform protection of whom large associations and permanent establishments of many Christians can alone be commensurate and adequate. The pressing necessities of peculiar circumstances detain, in long absence from the unfortunate, the benevolent, and powerful individuals, to whom they look up for protection. Sickness interrupts their care and vigilance, and ruthless death, at the last, puts a long and final period to their labours, and their influence. And an institution thus constituted necessarily suffers many privations of its best friends, and is many times necessarily cast an orphan upon the public mercy. Therefore it is that your new charity is built upon a more permanent foundation: because, speaking according to human ideas, should a permanent succession of similar members follow the bright example of the present, from such a community zeal can never be removed, wisdom, and judgment, and discretion can never

depart, charity can never be extinguished, *mercy can never die.*

Therefore it is that every friend of mercy must applaud your good work; therefore it was that when I beheld the dawn of this new charity, when it was yet young, I was cheered and rejoiced in the prospect of the approaching day: and I still rejoice in its rising splendor, even though that splendor threatens to extinguish our feeble light. But, O! suffer not our humble charity to be extinguished or forgotten. Remember the virtues of the pious foundress. Our charity is sanctified by long experience, it is sanctified by the sighs of repentance, by the blessings of reformation, by the departure of spirits redeemed in Christ through your means, by the death of the sainted foundress who bequeathed it to you as a sacred legacy. Remember, I said, it is sanctified by long experience, we are the first born of your charity. Let not the younger and favoured rob the elder (who long has been hunting in the field) of his birth-right and his blessing. Or if our preference be gone, is charity so soon exhausted? If you have given away your blessing to the younger, let them even be blessed; but have you, the protectors of the unfortunate, but *one* blessing? O! bless us, even *us*, also. Remember whilst now the sun of your light, which shineth before men to the glory of your Father which is in Heaven, walks abroad in all its splendor; remember, that during the long, long night, when
the

the unhappy wanderer was abandoned to utter reprobation and scorn, this was the only glimmering lamp to light her steps to Christ; remember, that it was the only star, the polar star, by which misery and repentance were enabled to steer their course through rocks and quicksands, and to escape from foundering in the eternal abyss. O, therefore, though your more splendid light may obscure its feebler rays, suffer it to exist for the guide of misery, of misery which yet I have to bring into your view.

Copious and plentiful as the dew of your bounty is, wide as you have opened the sluices of your benevolent hearts, to refresh with your charity every fainting soul in the land—yet still are there many to whom your mercy cannot be perfectly extended under your new institution. And I seize on the present favourable moment to bring them before you; for never, till this moment, could I devise a probable mode of relief for them, but now the good providence of God has opened the prospect to me by your institution of another charity similar to ours. For I repeat it; your charities, the new institution, together with this on its present plan, are insufficient for the evident and comprehensive purpose of your benevolent hearts. There is a wide chasm in your charities; there is an extensive class of unfortunate and repenting females, between whom and the heaven of your mercy, that *Abraham's bosom*, in which the humble

ble are fostered, *a great gulph is fixed which they who would pass cannot ; even to cool the tip of their tongue tormented* in the hopeless misery of their condition—To them your charity falls short of its christian scope—their affliction seems to have been overlooked and forgotten in both arrangements.

These objects are of two descriptions, neither of which ever enter your hospitals, or will probably avail themselves of your new and extensive charity ; and of which few, very few indeed, have ever been sheltered even in this more private retreat. I mean therefore to propose now to your consideration, the expediency of reserving this house for the sole reception of such persons, as soon as the penitents, now under your immediate protection, shall have been provided for, and, according to their situation, restored to their friends or their parents, or instructed and recommended to earn an honest livelihood as useful members in society. Your new and extensive charity will afford adequate relief to the general and more pressing misery of this city, and this house, without charging a benevolent public with any new burthen, will become the place of refuge for many of the unfortunate, to whose peculiar circumstances no one charity is accommodated, and who have therefore been passed over by neglect, and almost by exclusion, in all the wonderful exertions of your *mercy*.

Before I enter on this part of my subject—Ye penitents of the humbler class, ye who have been
always

always the great majority here, let me address myself to you, understand and forgive me—I cannot mean to injure you; no, I mean by this proposal, only to extend relief to those numerous and unhappy females, whose situation you know, who from whatever causes you know, do not join your society here; and to whom the generous charity of your hearts must wish a participation of that peace which you have experienced, and of that salvation for which you hope. Forgive me, I do not, I cannot mean to abandon or to slight that penitence of which I have been the advocate and the witness, now full thirteen years: to slight that contrition and those sighs which find an easier passage through the humble heart, than through the incumbrance of the splendid palace; and which meet no less favourable acceptance at the throne of mercy. No, I cannot slight you, I cannot forget you; the many examples of your humble reformation and sincerity are graven deep on my recollection. I have seen the progress of light informing ignorance, I have seen depravity reclaimed, repentance confirmed, and despair softened into blessed hope. I have seen every christian grace learned or restored within these walls; I have seen them and heard of them established in the world; I have seen them in health and in sickness; and I have seen them on the solemn bed of death, where no deceit is practised even on human ignorance. No, believe me I do not, I cannot slight you. I only

with that mercy which has preserved you should also be extended to others who have hitherto been forgotten.

When I say that some persons appear to have been forgotten in the establishment of this and also of the new charity, I think I hear the friends of both vindicate the equal liberality of their mutual benevolence; I think I hear them say, have we refused or rejected any? are not the arms of our charity open to receive, and to cherish every penitent? is not the protection of this house limited only by its resources? and what limits the benefits of the new institution? I answer all such questions as these in his words, who came to offer to repenting sinners the terms of the Gospel and eternal life. *A certain man made a great supper and bade many; and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come, for all things are now ready. And they all, with one consent, began to make excuse. You know these were the rich who had made purchases and formed connections. To our invitation from the same class, are sent the same excuses. You know, also, that the Lord, then sent out into the streets and lanes of the city, that his house might be filled, and declared in his anger, that they who were bidden should not taste of his supper. (Luke xiv. 24.)* Such has also been nearly the event in this house; few, very few indeed, of the originally better class have tasted of your supper here, and fewer of them will taste of that great
supper

supper which you have newly and abundantly prepared. And wherefore have they not? Alas! they are yet entangled in the snares of the world; they have not yet *spent all in riotous living*, and whilst any resource remains open, whilst yet their *portion of goods* is not exhausted, they are still irresolute. *Whilst famine in a strange land* is yet distant from the *prodigals*, whilst they are not yet compelled to minister to the foul sensuality of the *very swine*, however sick of their condition, however detesting their situation, and conscious of their *sins against heaven and before you*; they cannot arise and cast themselves upon your charity, or can they brook the still deeper imaginary disgrace of entering your hospitals as *hired servants*. And yet your tenderness would, I am persuaded, with paternal feeling rescue them long before the last extremity, if they would accept your *mercy*. And many a living instance is there to be found in your city, of prodigal children not yet plunged into the last dire misery. Many a living instance may be found of elegance and accomplishments undone, and yet struggling to live with dignity in disgrace, and without baseness in sin. She clings with desperate hold to the poor remains of her better days, she wraps close around her the sullied and spotted robe of her former rank, and cherishes, even in her debasement, something of that ideal respect which she considers annexed to it, and still maintains as her privilege and birth-right among the daughters

daughters of misfortune : therefore she flees with haughty pride the humble society of your penitents ; she loathes your charity, and prefers desperately to perish unreformed and unrelieved.

But your tender hearts are not closed against the error of human opinions, any more than against the errors of human actions. You, ye rich and great, ye proud and ye high-born, can find about your hearts some pity for the prejudices, as well as the sins and sorrows of her who has been precipitated from better hopes. And when an easy mode of relief is opened to restore *her* also to God, and perhaps to society, do not, however imperfect, shut her out from *your* mercy and from *his*.

Alas ! how severe are our demands sometimes on the unfortunate ; to how abject a state do we wish to tread down the fallen ! We would divest them of every human feeling ; we would imagine human repentance to be what indeed it *ought*, but what it never *is* ; we would have the sinner humbled to the dust ; we would have her abhor herself as the outcast of society, as one on whose *forehead God had set his mark* of reprobation, and of vengeance, that *all men might know and kill her*. But, whatever may be the complexion of sin, where has it this just effect on the mind ? Not in the world at large : not in the great world, under equal and similar degrees of guilt : hardly even among the lowest of the miserable, whom dire
necessity

necessity drives into the shelter of your protection by her scourge, which is twisted with famine, and nakedness, and disease. This contrite and broken humility of heart proceeds alone from God's especial grace; and though not often vouchsafed in a wicked world, yet it is not the less a Christian's duty to endeavour to aid the imperfection of repentance, and to rescue from imminent perdition the half-converted sinner. Human sins of the darkest complexion do not always break down the spirit and the soul; and that degradation which you deplore, and which you abhor, by an inherent vigor, or call it obstinacy, of the mind, endeavours to sustain itself in some imagined degree of elevation, from which it will not brook to descend, unless irresistible necessity compel it. Pride is the last sentiment, a-kin to virtue, which can be expelled from the degraded and indignant soul. Pride quits not human nature in its lowest misery, it spurns its abject condition, and looks for support to what it was. These lost females, of whom I speak, look back upon their former higher condition: they were angels once, though now they are fallen---*How art thou fallen, O Lucifer, son of the morning; how art thou cut down to the ground.* (Is. xiv. 12.) They were angels once; and, like the fallen angels, their pride precludes repentance---just and humble repentance: for, enough they feel of that bitter and barren repentance, which sin never fails to leave behind.

And

And they are numerous and miserable as that mighty host outcast from heaven, whose situation and sufferings are so pathetically described by our great and sublime poet :

“ ——— Angel forms, who lay entranced
 “ Thick as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks
 “ In Vallombrosa.

“ ——— he views
 “ The dismal situation —————
 “ Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 “ And rest can never dwell, hope never comes,
 “ That comes to all.”

Milton, B. 1.

Have mercy on those fallen angels of the earth : leave them not even a pretence to choose perdition : act towards them the kind physician, who consults the fastidious appetite and the wayward caprice of his patient's stomach. If, alas ! repentance be wholesome to the soul, and necessary to eternal salvation, do not disdain to gild the bitter pill, and to correct the disgusting severity of the nauseous medicine. Behold among the objects who would perhaps accept your tender assistance, the daughter of that pious pastor from whose eloquent lips, and from whose more eloquent example, yourselves have learned the lessons of eternal life. He did not forget to train his beloved child in the ways of life, but his partial fondness bestowed upon her accomplishments beyond her rank, and lavished in ornaments for that

that beauty which was his pride all he could spare, in far other hopes. His error has been punished, though he lives not, nor could live, to behold its punishment. Vanity and want, and the promises of the betrayer, have hurried her into early destruction, in which she is detained by the extravagance of your sons, and the infidelity of your husbands.

Behold, among the objects who would perhaps accept of your tender assistance, the beloved spouses of the defenders of your country. Torn away, on the first alarm of war and danger, to combat in the tented field, or on the pathless waters, they were compelled to leave behind to the protection of their country their dear and only treasure. Alas! what gratitude has their country shewn, what protection has it afforded? The sleek and pampered son of wealth, who remains at home on the bed of sloth, of luxury, and wantonness, has stolen, like a thief, that treasure which he dared not to look upon in the presence of its owner. O! save her for mercy; redeem her with a mite of that gold, from misery and sin, for his sake who is now spilling his blood to guard it for you---who is now spilling his blood to guard your precious lives: spare him, when he returns wounded and maimed, and crowned with glory, from having his laurels tarnished by encountering public shame. O! hide from his eyes the only sight he ever feared, and hide from the world the only disgrace he has ever experienced.

Another

Another description of misery requires perhaps no less the quiet and tenderness of such a retreat as I move you to establish here.---Among the objects of your bounty, behold also the tender and deluded girl, who having, like our mother, Eve, been beguiled to taste of sin, has her eyes now first opened. When now the accursed serpent, who by complicated falsehood and perjuries wound himself into her unsuspecting heart, tells her at length, the first and only truth which ever escaped his practised lips, that she is abandoned. Ah! see how the villain's cruelty rends her childish heart! Abandoned!--she had been indeed abandoned long before; when first she sacrificed to him her friends, her parents, her spotless fame. But of these she had made a willing and a triumphant sacrifice for him, and now her agony is all for him--alone for him: with regard to every other loss, of all which the fervent and youthful bosom holds dear, the bitterness of death had long been passed. But now her agony is for the treachery of her undoer alone; to her an inconceivable treachery--to her an impossible treachery. Did *she* not, and Heaven too, witness his wondrous oaths? and did she not *believe* his *eternal* love? And yet he abandons her, aggravating his barbarity by the situation in which he leaves her--bearing, in shame and sorrow, the dear and innocent pledge of their love. O! since he can serve her thus--since he, who was *truth itself*, proves false,

it

it is a bad world : a world with which she will no longer keep terms of peace.—Distraction and despair succeed.

If you feel with the common sympathy of the human breast, O ! snatch her timely out of this abyss of misery ; and place her—but where ? She is no object for your penitentiary ; the objects there are new and horrid forms to her—repentance and sin recovering from dire disease. But she thinks not of sin ; she never thought of sin ; her heart is broken by ill-requited love. Every object there is discordant with the acute feelings of her wounded soul ; and instead of healing, irritate and outrage ; turning back the indignant mind upon itself, and pouring bitterness into the cup of your bounty and of her affliction. O ! says the ruined girl to her own bursting heart, if purest love be thus requited, how detestable is man ! If this be the soft tenderness of christian charity, it is a strange virtue ; and love to her is cruel treachery ; and christian charity but another name for cold-hearted neglect. Believe me, I draw no imaginary pictures ; I have seen these examples even within these walls—even under the mild discipline of this private retreat. I have seen the deluded girl shrink with horror at her situation, when she found herself degraded, without distinction, into a companion of those who had once been (what never had entered into her imagination) profligate and abandoned : I have seen
her

her nauseate the cup of your mercy: I have seen aggravated anguish, instead of the kind consolation you intended, fasten upon her heart, sink down her hopes, and bring on the wasting hectic and the silent consumption. Alas! alas! the physic for the soul should not be carelessly and rudely administered, if we would restore the patient—if we would not kill instead of curing. If the deluded and ruined girl be the object of your generous compassion, find out for her some safe and peaceful retreat—some secure harbour, where she may be at rest, when the high storm of her agonized soul shall gently subside: where similar woe, and errors of no deeper dye, may infuse their first consolation through a sweet sympathy: where the tenderness of genuine charity shall gently open to her weak mind the cheering prospects of a happy restoration to her forgiving parents; and where the calm and elevated assurance of religion shall disclose to her the more certain and joyful hope of acceptance with her God.

All this good, and more, is now, for the first time, in your power to accomplish with facility. —The *manner*, your wisdom shall *hereafter* at leisure dictate; the *means*, God hath placed *now* in your liberal hands; and with the *will* and *purpose* his grace has inspired your feeling hearts. But whether you shall consider it expedient to reserve this house hereafter for the objects I have now recommended, or whether you may prefer

that it should remain the unaltered monument of experienced utility to the accustomed objects of your tender care ; whatever may be your various determinations and opinions (unless, which God forbid, you should disapprove of our labours, and abandon that repentance which would seek refuge here), one uniform measure of conduct is equally necessary, at this moment, for the support of all: one sentiment of compassion: one sentiment of that tender virtue now become habitual to your generous bosoms.

Stand forth then, ye great, and ye good *, be not ashamed of appearing like your divine master, the friends of publicans and sinners : and in your bright examples—*let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.*

Stand forth the advocates of those errors which, like your blessed Saviour, you at once condemn and reform ; and shew compassion on those infirmities and sins, to which the goodness of God has not left you subject.

Stand forth clad in the robe of christian charity, which hides the multitude of sins—that robe which veils the inevitable defects of human imperfection in the sight of God and man—that robe, more

* The collection (which is not unprecedented in Dublin) was on this day made by ladies of the first rank : who condescended to appear both as the advocates and protectors of the Magdalen Asylum.

becoming than all your fancied ornaments, which now fits so easy, and flows so amply around you; which brings to view every latent grace, and encompasses the form with the lustre of heavenly glory, arrayed in this lovely, shall I say this fashionable, robe of heavenly charity. Stand forth now the guardian angels of falling misery; stretch forth the power of your liberal hands, and save them from imminent perdition. But I will not stimulate your willing zeal—I know your character; over all these fair islands it is become renowned for works of mercy and wondrous charity—It is far beyond my praise. But *he* who is above—he who can amply recompense your utmost virtue, and who will not forget even a *cup of cold water only bestowed on one of these unfortunates*—He has seen, and noted you down in the record of eternal life,

SERMON XIV.

Preached at ST. ANNE'S DUBLIN, Feb. 25, 1795, being
the day appointed for a PUBLIC FAST.

GENESIS xviii. 23, 24.

"AND ABRAHAM DREW NEAR AND SAID,
"WILT THOU ALSO DESTROY THE RIGH-
"TEOUS WITH THE WICKED?
"PERADVENTURE THERE BE FIFTY RIGHTE-
"OUS WITHIN THE CITY; WILT THOU
"ALSO DESTROY, AND NOT SPARE THE
"PLACE, FOR THE FIFTY RIGHTEOUS THAT
"ARE THEREIN?"

THE intercession of Abraham with the Lord of Heaven and Earth, for the guilty cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, impresses the mind with many serious reflections, well suited to the solemnity of this day. To some of these reflections, with the practical instruction to be derived from them, I am now to request your attention. I shall arrange my discourse on this piece of sacred history, under the following principal topics of instruction:—

First. We hence learn to adore the tender and most abundant mercy of our Almighty Creator.

Secondly. We learn, from the event, to tremble at the terrors of his angry justice.

Thirdly. We learn the means by which we may conciliate the divine mercy, and escape the divine vengeance, both collectively as nations, and individually as responsible beings.

That God is abundant in mercy, and that his ear is open to the prayers of the righteous, we cannot doubt, when we recollect the tender indulgence with which he heard the intercession of Abraham. He not only condescended to permit his repeated expostulations, but, he heard him even with favour; and whilst, in their progress, we shudder at the increasing presumption of the patriarch's petitions, we are at each period relieved by the free mercy of God, till there appears no farther room for mercy. Wilt thou not spare the city (says the imploring patriarch to his Creator), *for fifty righteous*, (I will not detain you with the whole passage, he proceeds) *for forty and five, for forty, for thirty, for twenty, for ten?* And he said, *I will not destroy it for ten's sake.* O the long suffering and inexhaustible mercy of our God! For sake even of ten righteous men, had they been found within their walls, God would have spared those cities whose crimes and abominations had come up before him, and whose justice was in default of them compelled to devote them to destruction, by fire and brimstone from Heaven. If such were the abundance of his mercy, that for
so

so small a number he might have been entreated to have spared those guilty cities, can we entertain a doubt, that he may yet be entreated to spare our less criminal cities and nations, and avert the scourge of blood and devastation with which he threatens further to punish our offences? Yes, the Lord will hear our prayer, and will accept the sacrifice of our vows this day. He will comfort us in the words of the prophet Joel: *Therefore also now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them. Wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith, and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen. But I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part towards the utmost sea, and his stink shall*

come up, and his ill savour shall come up, because he hath done great things. (Joel ii. 12 to 20.) The striking passage of Scripture from which we have taken our text, together with this passage of the prophet Joel, were the sacred writings in all other places silent, would be sufficient to prove that abundant mercy of God, in the hope of which we offer up our humble petitions this day. But, is there a page of the Scriptures, in which this most amiable attribute of our God is not to be found most strongly presented? And what is the New Testament but a covenant of inconceivable mercies provided for the salvation of mankind, from the foundation of the world? In the Gospel of his beloved Son, indeed, is set forth a display of his mercies towards his frail creatures, beyond our hopes, beyond our imagination. Of the tenderness, and of the extent of God's mercies, therefore, we can entertain no doubt: we experience them every hour, we have his unerring word, that we shall experience them even in greater measure, to eternity. But, to entitle ourselves to this blessed inheritance, we must fulfil certain conditions. The free mercies of God are offered only to the sincerely faithful and repenting through Christ. If we continue in sin, we are not to expect pardon for sin; if we wish to obtain forgiveness of sin, if we love the rewards which are promised to obedience, we must repent, and obey the commandments of God; for *Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into*

into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. (Mat. vii. 21.)—

The overflowing mercy of God, however free and gracious it may be, cannot contradict his supreme and awful attribute of justice. If, therefore, in the intercession of Abraham, or in the passage I have cited from the prophet Joel, we find any thing suited to the solemnity of this day, and our peculiar circumstances, we are to fulfil the conditions of a lively and fruitful repentance, if we hope to profit by the mercies of God displayed in them. We must otherwise submit to the fearful apprehensions of his offended justice ; this is the *second* part of my discourse.

And O ! Almighty Lord, how manifold have been our transgressions ! how often have our sins provoked thee to anger, and roused up thine indignant vengeance, which would have reposed upon the softness of thy mercy. But, *Turn us again, thou Lord of Hosts ; turn the light of thy countenance upon us, and we shall be whole.*

Let us hear some examples of God's justice.

The justice of God, which finally deals with impenitent and wicked nations according to the measure of their crimes, notwithstanding the intercession of Abraham, and the favourable mercy with which the Almighty condescended to hear him, fell in dire vengeance upon the devoted cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. The holy Jerusalem, the chosen city wherein the divine presence was mani-

fested upon earth, with that most glorious temple which was sanctified by the presence of our Lord himself, notwithstanding the warnings of the prophets, notwithstanding their threatenings and earnest exhortations, has been destroyed by the sword, the pestilence and famine, and trodden down of the Gentiles.

Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul; be not cut off in her iniquity, for this is the time of the Lord's vengeance: he will render unto her a recompence. (Jer. li. 6.) The mighty Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed. (Jer. li. 8.) The prophet Jonah warned the great city of Nineveh, and it repented in sackcloth and ashes, but again it returned to former sins, and provoked the long suffering and vengeance of God: desolation and destruction have long since fallen upon it; and even the situation of that city, which contained above 600,000 souls, has been long unknown; the *wild beast of the forest inhabits it, and the place thereof knoweth it no more.* Imperial Rome herself has suffered a degree of humiliation below the meanest of her own provinces, and even now accepts a trivial protection from that island, whose tears her former mighty lords despised. What shall we say of that city, which, in the language of the prophet, we may call the modern Babylon.—*Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine, therefore the nations are mad.* (Jer.

(Jer. li. 7.) That city calls herself regenerated and free ; may God in his mercy preserve us from such regeneration, purchased by blood and crimes, and from such freedom, which oppresses more heavily than the most atrocious despotism. If the inevitable justice of offended Heaven thus purge a polluted nation for its crimes and abominations, we are far, we may say, from their enormity ; far be their punishment from us. But, alas ! let us not be confident ; we are involved but too deeply in their sins, and perhaps in their punishment ; though we trust it will not fall upon us in the extreme of its severity. A part of their punishment we have sustained for our sins, in the calamities which attend a state of war. Can we forget the slaughter and captivity of our brave countrymen ? Can we forget the pride, or dissemble the success of the enemy ? Can our imagination bear to contemplate, even at a safe distance, the clamours of war ? Can even those few, who have lost no friend in this destructive contest, bear to contemplate the sufferings, and the many deaths of the bravest of our countrymen—in the islands of the west, where they have sunk under a burning sky, unnerved by scorching heat, oppressed by fatigue, melted down by pestilence—on the continent in the east, where a handful has been oppressed by thousands ; where valour has only had the choice of a glorious death, and where wisdom has only been able to effect a difficult retreat ; where the opposite extreme of a
 rigorous

rigorous climate has frozen up the valiant spirit, and stretched him out in death? Yes, we have had a taste of that bitter cup, which offended Heaven pours out upon devoted nations.

We have felt, indeed, some of the calamities of war; and some ill-advised and unquiet spirits, within the bosom of our own country, have exhibited symptoms of discontent, even under our equal laws; and seem, with cruel expectation, to look forward to those disturbances, which might put them more rapidly in the way of dangerous gain, than usually happens by the safe road of honest industry. Like savage and hungry birds of prey, they snuff up, they hope for, and rejoice in the distant carnage. But, thank God, like the birds of prey, we trust they are also few in number. Neither have they, with all the arts of our enemies, been able to disturb materially the grand and dignified tranquillity, and the lovely image of peace and prosperity, which our happy government has maintained in our blessed islands, even during the paroxysm of the most bloody war, which hath ever raged in the kingdoms of Europe.

But look upon our enemies, and, amidst their rapid successes, with which, like a whirlwind, they destroy all things in their progress, look upon them, and tremble at the wrath of God, whilst you reflect upon the origin of this irresistible power. That the supreme Lord of Heaven and Earth has
sent

sent them forth to scourge the nations of the earth; and that he alone is to be looked up to as the author of the power of the conquerors, and of the just punishment both of the conquerors and the conquered, we first acknowledge with humble reverence.

But, if we look into the second causes of that power, we shall see God's justice exercised tremendously against those very conquering enemies, so that their situation is more deplorable than even that of those countries they have overrun. How then have they obtained their enormous power? By the subversion of every principle dear to men, by the plunder of property, by confusion, by crimes, and by blood. Is there, in the history of all the revolving ages and empires, since the world's first foundation, to be seen such a catalogue of horrors, and of savage destruction, as the annals of a few late years exhibit, in a country once considered the most polished of the earth? Every thing, human and divine, overturned; laws, customs, and opinions, and religion; the temples of God polluted and prophaned by all the blasphemies and abominations of men; the sanctions of his laws denied, and hope itself torn from the grasp of the dying man. Poverty, famine, and terror, stalked through the land, and frightened exile has fled from it. Armies have been swelled by hosts innumerable, driven, some by madness, some by compulsion, and some by despair, from their scenes of horror

horror at home. Property has been confounded, plunder and proscriptions have prevailed, murders have been perpetrated by the assassin's knife, and massacres by contending factions. Whilst the scaffold has been deluged now by the best blood of the land, now by the blood of those who were the tyrants of yesterday, and again by theirs, when their brief authority was wrested from them; and this has been called liberty. O may the gracious mercy of God regard our supplications this day, and avert from our shores their sanguinary liberty, and their horrid convulsions; and teach us to prize, as we ought, that precious and rational liberty which we enjoy under a mild government, and equal laws. And if it be the will of Heaven, that we should still continue in a state of war, may its bloody scenes be still acted on some distant theatre, and never pollute our flourishing cities, or our peaceful fields. And may those swelling waters, which God has interposed between us and our enemies, continue to stand his perpetual boundary, which they shall never pass; whilst his most mighty protection, being conciliated to us his faithful people, he shall unite us in one heart, and one mind; he shall hold his eternal shield over our brave defenders, and direct their floating thunders to scatter and destroy the rash invaders.

But if we would conciliate the favour of God, and obtain his sure protection, we are to consider
the

the proper means. This consideration shall employ the last part of my discourse.

If as a people, and as individuals, we be found virtuous, wise, and religious, our safety is ensured already. God will not give us over to our enemies. It hath not been known, in the system of his providence towards nations, that he hath ever abandoned a virtuous people. Righteousness hath as uniformly tended to exalt a nation, as sin hath tended to their reproach and destruction. Such is the established operation of God's providence; and the people who can be pronounced righteous may also be pronounced superior to all the malice of their enemies, and under the immediate protection of the Lord of Hosts.

Are we, my brethren, entitled to this almighty protection? Do we serve the Lord as his faithful people, and have we received the seal of his angel *on our foreheads* individually as the *servants and the elect of God*; as the *saints who bear in their hands triumphant palms, and who are clothed in robes which are washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*. (Rev. vii. 14.) Alas! how far are we below this exalted righteousness! How shall we dare to dissemble the sad truth on this solemn day! How shall we dare to dissemble in this holy temple, where our Lord and Judge is present in the midst of us!—*We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy*

thy judgments. O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day: to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel that are near and that are far off. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee: to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him. (Dan. ix. 5, 9.) But, will the Lord our God bestow upon us his mercy and forgiveness unconditionally?—We must not indulge such presumptuous hope, which his eternal justice forbids. The condition of his mercy is repentance through Christ our Saviour: the condition is, fruitful and sincere repentance: the condition is, reformation, both public and private—reformation, both as a nation and as individuals. Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; then shalt thou cry, and he shall say, here I am. If thou take away from the midst of thee the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking vanity: and if thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul; then shall thy light rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day. And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones. And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in. (Is. lviii. 12.) Is not this the fast

fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (Is. lviii. 6.)

That the government of this nation has wisely encouraged every practicable and pious measure for the service of religion, and for our public reformation, must afford consolation and confidence to every lover of his country: and that its further measures, which appear so consonant to the instructions of the sublime prophet, will be attended with God's blessing, and bind us together as one family, connected by strict unanimity and mutual interests, we ardently hope, and we firmly trust. Where, among the short-sighted children of men, can that man be found, whose wisdom and experience can penetrate the complicated labyrinth of probable events, so as to undertake to decide upon the measures most expedient for all? In such difficulties, God is the only and the best resource. Human sagacity must acknowledge its blindness; human considerations must be laid aside; rulers must quit the winding and intricate paths of politics, and turn (would to God they did so always) to the plain paths of rectitude and justice, and then repose the events on the merciful providence of God. Alas! how difficult, and at the same moment how necessary, is it, in the delicate and perilous situation of this kingdom, to reconcile the jarring opposition

opposition of the interests of its children ! But is not this difficulty and this necessity of wise regulation equally applicable to the jarring passions of the human breast ? Let us then leave the vast and ponderous cares of government to a more suitable place, and more equal abilities. Let them occupy their anxious hours who groan beneath their weight. Let us look at home : here is our place and province. Who is there to be found that governs himself ?—Our rulers may labour at the reformation of the state.—Who is there that labours at his own reformation ? We are this day assembled under the authority of our rulers for the good purpose of public humiliation before God for our manifold sins, and to supplicate his protection and mercy, without which we must become a prey to our enemies. But what have we done towards this good object in secret, before our *Father who seeth in secret* ? What have we done separately, individually, to humble ourselves in his sight, and justify by our repentance that mercy and protection which we now implore ? Have we made any reasonable progress in our reformation since the last year, and the year before, when we have been solemnly called together for the same important and indispensable purpose ? I have said, have we made any progress in this work—nay, have we even begun ? Are we not to be found now as we were the last year, and the year before, and all the former years, still unreformed ?

reformed?—nay, hardening in sin, and growing old in the love of the world? Of what avail then can it be, that the wisdom of government should sanctify a fast, and call a solemn assembly of the nation at large, if the people who compose the nation absent themselves from the temple of God; or, having implored his mercy in stated form, insult him by neglecting the conditions on which alone it can be obtained?—*Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?* (Is. lviii. 5.) The voice of authority may, indeed, call us together, to implore the mercy of God; and we may not disobey; we may even spend the solemn day in every respect as we ought; but if its good effects end with the day, can we imagine such formal parade, such barren ceremony, such transitory repentance, will be acceptable to God? And yet authority can do no more; it can only prescribe the forms, but cannot reach the heart. If, when the day is closed, the great account of repentance be also closed, and when the next morning dawns the world resume all its accustomed influence over the heart and the actions, how ineffectual are the pious forms prescribed by authority to avert God's anger, or to reform a sinful people? If this day should prove another fast without repentance; if it should

A a

exhibit

exhibit again unfruitful repentance, producing no reformation; shall we not be found guilty of a solemn mockery, which may hasten the tardy vengeance of long-suffering heaven?

It is not the numbers and the known valour of our armies; it is not the superiority, the ardour and admirable courage of our fleets, which ensure to us the victory.---*It is better to put our trust in the Lord, than to put any trust in man.* (Ps. cxviii. 8.) It is not the power and the zeal of our allies which can defeat our enemies---*it is better to trust in the Lord, than to place any confidence in princes:* (Ps. cxviii. 9.) *If God be for us, who can be against us? He breaketh the bow and snappeth the spear in sunder, and scattereth the nations that delight in war.* (Ps. xlv. 9.) *Storms and tempests fulfil his word.* (Ps. cxlviii. 8.)

Where then is the effectual reformation to begin, which may secure his almighty protection? That effectual reformation must begin in the breast of every individual: it must derive its origin from those laws which alone reach the heart; and it must extend itself to all the actions, and become visible in the life of every individual, who would conciliate the mercy of God. And the true lover of his country and the genuine patriot will be found not alone in those elevated and difficult situations, where the complex business of the government of the nation is wisely, and laboriously, and honestly administered; but he shall be called
even

even by a juster title, a true lover of his country and a genuine patriot, who, in the very sequestered and humblest walks of life, exercises wisely and according to God's laws the government of himself: for God loveth the dwelling-place of the righteous, and for ten righteous he had spared the guilty cities. We trust that in our cities more than ten righteous shall be found; and if God spare us for their sake, we shall justly honour that man as the truest patriot, who proves himself to be the best Christian. Who then, duly impressed with this truth, would prove such an abandoned traitor to his country as, after this hour, to return to the deliberate commission of those sins, which provoke God to shower down on our heads that vengeance with which he threatens us?

If I have been able to present before you, in its proper view, this important truth, that the safety of a people depends above all things upon the protection of God; and that we are to obtain that protection alone by conforming our lives to his righteous laws (and, observe, if I have failed, the truth is in no wise impaired by my weakness); then every man must think it incumbent on him to look to his ways, and by his individual and speedy reformation, to contribute to the glorious work of conciliating the mercy of God towards his country. Whatever circumstances, therefore, may have engaged the various members who

compose this congregation, to appear before God this day in his holy temple---whether as they ought, and as I trust the majority have assembled, under true religious impressions, and the full conviction of the necessity of imploring the only safe protection of the Lord of Hosts, in the perilous state of a most sanguinary war; or whether, as it may happen, accident, or curiosity, or other vain motives, have brought some among us; let all depart with the strong conviction that their bounden duty is to look to themselves, to search into their hearts, whether there be any way of wickedness within them, and to return in time to God. Let every man now behave as it becomes each soldier to behave in the field of battle; let each consider that the fate of the day, and of his country, depends upon his single arm. In the one case, victory inclines to determined valour; but in the other, the protection of God is most assured to a righteous nation. If then this day is to be truly the commencement of a blessed reformation, shall we hear of or behold any more those fatal sins, which provoke the anger of Heaven? Shall we hear the holy name of God not only blasphemed in our streets by low profligacy and ignorance, but shall we ever again hear it insulted and profaned by wanton and high-born youth? Shall we hear ever again that the low peasant has been
tempted

tempted to sink his soul by perjury, or that the bribe was given by his unprincipled lord? Shall we again hear of innocence betrayed, and cast off to utter perdition, and vice and villany triumphant and carested? Shall we again hear of Dives clothed in purple, and swelled with sumptuous fare, and behold Lazarus at his gate naked, starving, and full of sores? Shall we hear again of gaming and revenge; those foul demons, who possess the miserable bodies of the pampered and the indolent, which goad them into madness—which cast them sometimes into the water, sometimes into the fire, and which no form of good words can exorcise, and no disciple of Christ can cast out? Shall we again hear of oppression, of injustice, of legal villany, which *justifies the wicked for reward, which devours widow's houses*? Shall we again hear of that boundless pride and ambition, among the sons of vain men, which precedes a fall; which abuses the gifts of God by profligate and abandoned courses; which degrades the dignity of noble birth, and hath scattered, like mendicants over the kingdoms of the world, the former princes of the earth? Let us arrest our attention for a moment upon the awful judgments of God, which we see fallen upon this race of men. Ye great, and ye powerful, above all—*When you have eaten and are full, beware lest ye forget God. He putteth down the mighty*

from his seat, and exalteth the humble and the meek.

But we will pass over the blackening catalogue of human wickedness; and we will not dwell upon the judgments which God is sometimes provoked to inflict on them here: a higher interest calls our attention. The vicissitudes of fortune may perhaps be born with equanimity; and the bloody field of battle, with all the horrors of war, may be survived; or a man may even meet his fate in such scenes with fortitude---*I say unto you, therefore, says our Lord, fear not those that destroy the body, but afterwards have no farther power, but fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.* (Matt. x. 28.) If we be not induced by the noble consideration of standing, like Moses, in the breach to save our country; and by our righteousness to call down upon it the mercy and protection of God: if we be not touched by our own near interests in the prosperity and security of our fellow-citizens: if our love of Mammon be greater than even our fear of God's sore judgments, famine, and war, and pestilence, with which he scourgeth sinful nations: yet let us, at least, not forget one indispensable interest—the eternal salvation of our immortal souls, which depends on our speedy repentance and reformation through Christ. The wise and tender providence of our heavenly Father has so accommodated our
highest

highest interests in this world to those of the next, that righteousness hath the promise of this world and of that which is to come; and that genuine patriotism and true religion go hand in hand, to accomplish the same glorious objects—the truest and most permanent happiness of men here, and their eternal happiness hereafter.

I will not now detain you by enumerating the duties at once of a good Christian and a good citizen: you cannot be ignorant of them. The laws of the Gospel, the laws of the land, and the laws of humanity, in all necessary particulars, are well understood. If you know my words, happy are you if you do them: would to God they were but practised as they are known. One duty, of a comprehensive nature, and peculiarly connected with the solemn supplications of this day, I shall remind you of—*Be ye merciful, even as your father in heaven is merciful. Give, and it shall be given unto you, good measure, and pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men measure into your bosoms. If when thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave then thy gift before the altar, and go and be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.* (Matt. v. 23.) The works of mercy are twofold—forgiveness of enemies, and alms deeds to the needy and the afflicted. If you expect, therefore, that God

should forgive you your trespasses, forgive your brother; banish private animosity, discord, envy, malice, calumny; first open your hearts to all your brethren and neighbours, in sympathy, benevolence, *doing unto others as you would they should do unto you*. Then open your hands, and be God's almoners to the poor and miserable, imparting freely a portion of those good things which he has entrusted to your stewardship, that you may attain eternal life, and additional blessings now by this good application of them. And here permit me to hope, when shortly * I shall be called upon to plead the cause of the poor and miserable from this place, that I shall have the happy opportunity of witnessing the first fruits of these good works, so acceptable in the sight of Heaven. O do not, ye wealthy and prosperous, on that day abandon this holy temple; be not satisfied to confine the extent of your mercy to narrow parochial restrictions; for we have worthy objects to present to your mercy. Turn not your face from any poor man, and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from you. He that hath bestowed upon you your wealth, and your prosperity, and your honours, will graciously continue those blessings to you, however uncertain their nature be; and although he hath, with awful severity,

* On the Sunday se'nnight following, for the Meath hospital,
stripped

stripped of them all many of the great ones of this earth, whose charity had not perhaps, as your's, covered the multitude of their sins. Your works of mercy shall prove also works of the most exalted public virtue: they shall be the true patriotism, which shall call down upon our city, and upon our nation at large, the choice blessings of the Father of all mercies, firm peace and security; and change domestic faction and civil discord into fraternal love and invincible union. Your righteousness shall save our city; and the almighty vengeance shall be averted, which is already gone abroad; which desolates the fairest kingdoms of Europe, and threatens from the distant horizon to visit our shores with bloody invasion. But, under the protection of Almighty God, the song of Moses, as in former days, when fierce invasion threatened us before, shall resound throughout our happy islands. *I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea; Pharaoh's chariots and his host he hath cast into the sea; his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. The depths have covered them, they sank unto the bottom as a stone. The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them, they sank as lead in the*
mighty

mighty waters. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the Gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. The Lord shall reign for ever. And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, answered them.—Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously, the horse and his rider he hath thrown into the sea, (Exodus, xv. 21.)*

SERMON XV.

Preached at ST. ANNE'S, DUBLIN, March 8, 1795. for the
Benefit of the MEATH HOSPITAL.

LUKE X. 36.

"WHICH NOW, OF THESE THREE, THINKEST
"THOU, WAS NEIGHBOUR UNTO HIM THAT
"FELL AMONG THE THIEVES?"

IN order that we may be enabled to make our observations more clearly on the duties connected with this question, and on the circumstances of the charity for which we are this day to solicit your protection, I shall request your permission to recite at large, from the Gospel, the occasion of the question, with the beautiful parable which precedes it, however strongly it must be impressed on the memory of every Christian.

And behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, What shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering, said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart,

and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering, said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was— (you will observe that the Samaritans and Jews, at this time, were bitter enemies, on account of religious disputes, and avoided all intercourse with each other, insomuch, that when our Lord asked the woman of Samaria for drink, she answered, How can'st thou, being a Jew, ask drink of me who am a woman of Samaria. Alas! religious disputes are not alone of modern date. But let us collect our Lord's judgment concerning the conduct which becomes as well those who differ in opinion, as other men, from the remainder of this parable.) But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of

of him. And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him, and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, he that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise.

Upon reading this passage, we are immediately offended at the insincerity of the lawyer. He asks our Lord a question, on the most important of all possible subjects—*What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* But he asks it unsincerely. And yet, this is a question, which, at some time, every thinking mind must put to itself. The enjoyment of this life, and the assurance of its speedy interruption; the fears, and the hopes of living again, which, from the dubious twilight which guides the untaught Indian, to the meridian glory of the Christian's full assurance, have engaged the minds of men, must prove the infinite value of the resolution of this great question. Yet did the lawyer ask it, with captious insolence, to *him* who alone could perfectly resolve it. Far be such conduct, as indecent as it was unwise, from any possible imitation among us. Our benign Lord did not rebuke him, but referred him to the known law of God for instructions how eternal life was to be obtained, and desired him to walk according to that law. But, instead of promising humble obedience, he started
a difficulty;

a difficulty ; he knew he was bound to love God supremely, and his neighbour as himself : but who is his neighbour ? How is he to regulate in practice that extraordinary love which he owes to others ? Is he to make no discrimination among men ? Is he to dissipate and waste his love to no good purpose, over the wide circle of society ? Or, if not, what are the precise bounds within which he is to confine its exercise ? With what admirable perspicuity, and with what irresistible truth has our Lord answered these, and all such questions, in his beautiful parable, so as to leave, it should seem, no possibility of justification or evasion, even to the unwilling heart. How evidently doth it thence appear, that this reciprocal and kind relationship subsists between all those who require assistance, and all those who are capable of affording it ? And that under these circumstances all men are neighbours, and those mutually the nearest, who can best bestow, and who most want assistance.

In the law of God our duty is clearly stated, it is strongly stated ; we know it well ; we speak of it ; we repeat the sacred and comprehensive precept which commands us to *love our neighbour as ourselves* ; we repeat the brief explanation of this sacred precept, *Do unto others as you would they should do unto you*. We repeat also with facility the sublimer precepts of the Gospel—*I say unto you, love your enemies ; bless them that curse you, and do good to them that hate you—That you may be children*

dren of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust. (Mat. v. 44.)

Every Christian has these divine sentences on his lips; he teaches them to his children, he placeth them in their hands, he bindeth them as frontlets between their eyes; and it is not only that they are known, but they are also plain and intelligible to all. But how are they practised? Alas! we fail not in the knowledge of our duty; we are well acquainted with it in the abstract; we seem only confused in the application; we fail only in the practice. We impose upon ourselves, like the lawyer, by feigned difficulties, and by false distinctions, when we are called upon to act the part of Christians. Who is so ignorant of the wiles of Mammon, as not to be conscious, that he hath at some time been beguiled by his subtlety? Who has not listned to his glosses and interpretations, and considered the very cases, when alone the duty was plain, to be those which were proper exceptions to the rule? Would to God that the professors of the Gospel were ever found to act according to the perfection of their law! and that *every one that nameth the name of Christ was found to depart from iniquity!* (2 Tim. ii. 19.) But we are far from this perfection; how can we dissemble the painful truth? Are not every bond of neighbourhood, and every tie of Christian charity daily and openly violated? Are not our ears daily
wounded

wounded by evil-speaking, by malice, and by calumny? Is not the christian name dishonoured by injustice, by fraud, and by oppression? Is not our meek profession outraged by private enmity, and by public war? Nay, under the very sanction of the mild laws of Christ's Gospel, what crimes have been committed, what cruelties have been perpetrated? The page of history is stained with the horrors of hypocrisy and fanaticism. But let us turn away from these, we trust, distant horrors; and which may the infinite mercy of God ever keep far from us. Let us look at home, among ourselves. We understand the law which relates to our neighbour; yes, but what is the degree of obedience paid to that law, when it clashes with bad passions? Still the hard and unwilling heart repeats, *And who is my neighbour*, whom I am commanded to love as myself? It cannot be my enemy whom I feel I do hate; not my rival in fame, in profit, in honour; not the man with whom I have no connection; not the foreigner; not the stranger; not the alien, who might interfere with my immediate and dear interests; not the man whose opinions are at war with mine, on the great subjects of politics and religion; not the man whose sable complexion has stamped him my slave; not the brother who would deprive me of my right; not the father who hath withheld his blessing from me; not the disobedient child, whom
I myself

I myself have disinherited, and cast out to feed on draff and husks.

Thus, from the remotest relations of humanity, even to the nearest ties of blood, all claims of neighbourhood are rejected by selfishness, by jealous avarice, or by depraved revenge. Alas ! what avails the law of God ? What though it be clear, comprehensive, and intelligible ? What though we read it well ; if its interpretation be made over to selfishness, to avarice, and revenge ? They make this sacred law soon to speak according to the poverty of the narrow soul, and according to the meditated purpose of the evil heart.— They may pervert the law here, but that is at their eternal peril ; for the time approaches, when God will vindicate his own righteousness and truth.

But enough has been said concerning the outrage, with which the Gospel is treated by men.— More, I trust, than was necessary before this congregation ; because I sincerely hope, that sins of such a complexion are seldom to be charged on those who frequent the temples of God.

But do we not, one and all, offend in a thousand smaller instances, against that law which commands us to love our neighbours as ourselves ?

Although we may not assault and wound our neighbour, may we not often be found unfeeling and careless concerning the misery of our neigh-

B b

bour,

bour, who has, like him in the parable, been assaulted and wounded by robbers, and left half dead? Have we never, like the priest and the levite, passed misery by on the other side? Have we not left our duty undone, whilst our neighbour perishes, or have we always discharged it like the generous Samaritan?

These enquiries lead me to the immediate object of this discourse, the most humane and excellent charity for which we plead. In the parable you have read of one wounded man, and your compassion has been moved; the objects of our charity, this day, are thousands of wounded, of diseased, and miserable. In the parable you have read of a generous Samaritan, and your hearts were with him; you shared his pious offices, you sympathised in his manly feelings. We have around us a number of Christians as generous, the supporters of, and the active members of our hospital: look upon them, applaud their glorious work, emulate them; *go and do thou likewise*. You read of, and you detested the priest and the levite; turn not away from us like them; affect not to be unacquainted with, refuse not to acknowledge your neighbour, whom we offer to your merciful and tender protection. Perhaps he is not of your parish; perhaps he is not of your city; perhaps he is a Jew, an Infidel, a Samaritan: yet do not turn away. Perhaps you have not looked upon him; perhaps you are not acquainted with his claims;

claims; perhaps you are ignorant of his misery: yet, for all this, turn not away from him; it is your duty to go up to him, to enquire, to examine him, to pour *oil and wine into his wounds, to carry him to an inn, and to give him in charge to those who can take care of him*, promising to pay his further expences. Our hospital is that inn; you shall hear how it is provided for the reception of those wounded and miserable. The nature of the institution, and its claims upon the public, are thus stated to me by one of the benevolent governors, and, I believe, one of the original founders of the hospital.

“ The Meath Hospital was instituted in the year 1756, now near 40 years, and was originally intended principally for the relief of poor manufacturers in the Earl of Meath’s Liberty. At its first opening it was supported only by annual subscriptions, and occasional benefactions, which, proving inadequate to the expences, a lottery was undertaken, in conjunction with the Governors of St. Nicholas’s hospital, for their mutual benefit, the profits of which did not answer their expectation; but, a prize of 1000*l.* falling to the share of the Meath Hospital, and some contributions, and generous benefactions, coming into the hands of the governors, they were thereby encouraged to erect the present most useful hospital, on a piece of ground taken for the purpose, on the Coomb, in the centre of the Earl of Meath’s Liberty, and in

the most convenient situation for the relief of the poor diseased manufacturers. It is a large, plain, and commodious building, which cost them upwards of 2300*l*. It being nearly in the centre of the county of Dublin, the governors applied to parliament, in the year 1774, to have it constituted a County Infirmary, with the same aid as other county infirmaries, being 100*l*. yearly from government, and the like sum by presentment from the county.

“The physicians and surgeons generously gave up, for the benefit of the charity, the annual allowance of 100*l*. which they are paid in other county hospitals, agreeably to which an act was passed.

“This 200*l*. with about 50*l*. annual subscriptions, an annual charity sermon, and some occasional benefactions, are now the only support of this most valuable and most necessary charity. The governors, by their unwearied exertions, and by the successful applications made to the benevolent and generous public, were enabled to discharge the cost of their building, and to erect 30 beds therein; but the great number of poor diseased persons, daily applying for relief, make an application to the public necessary to increase their funds, for the purpose of filling their hospital with beds, which will conveniently contain 30 more. The great advantage of these additional beds is evident, from the relief that has been given, even in the last year” (1793, in which I also appeared

appeared the humble advocate of this charity) "in the course of which upwards of 300 in-patients were admitted for cure, and 10,100 out-patients were relieved with medicine, and with medical and surgical assistance. The numbers last year, 1794, were much increased; in-patients 466; out-patients 10,600; above 900 per month; and the diseased poor, from all parts of the city and county, have been admitted, and others relieved as out-patients in the like proportion annually, since the institution of the charity."

The benevolent author of this sketch has spoken of the funds and resources of this hospital; you see that the funds are small, being, exclusive of the produce of the annual sermon, not above 250*l.* a year. You see that the resources are uncertain: rather they have been uncertain; for now, I trust, they are established upon a sure support. You observe the hospital was at first supported by subscriptions, and occasional benefactions; a resource in its nature transitory, a mountain torrent, swelled by rapid contributions of fashion, and suddenly past, leaving a dry and deformed chasm in society. You observe it was aided at first by a parliamentary grant; that, in its nature, was limited, and not to be expected to continue. You observe that it was also supported for a time on the profits of a lottery; a bad plan, and not well united with a christian charity, which does not assimilate with the vice of gaming; its produce, how-

ever, of 1000l. contributed to build the hospital. The benevolent writer of the paper I have read has omitted another expedient of the governors of this hospital, to raise money for their good work ; but neither was it very productive. Several theatrical performances were resorted to for the benefit of this charity ; but public charity does not derive any permanent support from such exhibitions ; the deductions are necessarily too many, the profits too uncertain ; depending on fashion and patronage, and a thousand other difficult circumstances.— Their present support depends on far other principles : it depends on permanent principles : it is derived from the just claim which the poor have upon the christian charity of the wealthy. This is a permanent principle, for the *poor shall never cease out of the land* : (Deut. xv, 11.) and *charity never faileth*. (1 Cor. xiii. 8.) Nay, so far from failing, blessed be God it prospereth and flourisheth in our happy island, as in its most congenial soil ; and under your protection, as in its most favourable aspect. For this God's especial blessing and protection is upon our city, and our kingdom ; and we shall not be given over as a prey to our enemies ; his *faithfulness and truth* shall be our *shield and buckler*.

The institution, which is this day the object of your protection, and the means of God's benign providence, further to secure you many blessings, is called the Meath Hospital. Do not suffer this
local

local and accidental name to impress you with any ideas that it is a private institution, or restricted in its uses and benefits to the class of numerous and poor manufacturers among whom it is most happily situated. True, indeed, it does relieve so much of their misery, that it may be even justly called their particular hospital. But yet its blessings are not exclusively bestowed on them, it is open to all the miserable of all parts of the city, and of every county of the kingdom. The poor of the Earl of Meath's Liberty, where it stands, obtain no advantage over other poor, except from their numbers and their vicinity to this pool of Bethesda, which cannot receive all who apply, but healeth only the first, as it were, who steppeth in after the troubling of the waters. An angel gave the pool its virtue; but the angelic charity of Christians can bestow, by God's blessing, more extensive efficacy on our Bethesda, and open it to multitudes, so that none shall be disappointed of all the miserable who require its healing virtue.

But this charity is not only liable to be misunderstood, it is liable to be overlooked. Among the many useful, splendid, and christian establishments in this city, which have justly obtained the patronage of the great and the good, this humble hospital is almost unknown. Its patrons are to be found, not in general, (except with some splendid exceptions) among the great, however they may among the good. They consist chiefly of men

whose profession engages them in the various arts of healing. More anxious to do good than to obtrude themselves upon public notice, they extend with the utmost economy among the multitude the small means of relief arising from the funds: what is deficient, and much is wanting, (be assured I know it is so) they are not backward to supply from their own bounty. For he, who, like his master, *goeth about doing good*, will not *look back when he has put his hand to the plough*, but will open his bountiful hand when human misery has awakened his feeling heart. This hospital is little known in the splendid quarters of this proud city; but it is well known in the populous and crowded lanes of misery. It is little known, and yet it well deserves to be known, and well deserves to be supported; that charitable institution which, in the course of a year, can maintain and relieve from the most dire accidents and diseases, within its hospitable walls, 466 wretched men, and afford effectual assistance to above 10,600 persons who have flocked this last year, and year by year, for a long series of years, to its doors, that charitable institution should not remain neglected, or unknown.

It is shameful to prosperity and health to be ignorant of the sufferings of above 11,000 of their fellow citizens and countrymen. It is sinful ignorance to indolent and pampered luxury, and if they make not speedy atonement, will be imputed by the justice of God. Selfishness stops his ears against
the

the cry of pain; he covers his eyes against the sight of misery, and, under the affectation of feeling, turns away and conceals a cold heart. He hides his face like a child, and thinks he shall not be seen. But *the eye of God is every where beholding the evil and the good: he is about our path, and about our bed, and spieth out all our ways.* Make then yourselves acquainted with misery, and the means of its relief. Turn not aside like the priest and the levite from the wounded traveller. You no doubt abhor the coldness of their hearts; yet probably they were contented with themselves, and applauded their own prudence, which saved them from trouble and expence, and never thought more of their wounded countryman. If we do not draw near to pain and misery, we feel it not, therefore it is our duty to draw near to them. The greatest and most important objects are small at a certain distance to which we may remove from them by choice or accident: at a greater distance they vanish altogether. In this respect, the feelings of the mind strictly resemble the vision of the eye. Take then a nearer view of misery and pain. It is your duty: so you shall understand what they require, and you shall be moved to afford them assistance. But how is that to be accomplished? Shall I press you to attend that hospital, where they croud daily in all the forms of poverty and pain? No, you could not bear their writhing pain, their mournful aspects, their heavy groans, their

their close approach ; disgust and horror would oppress you. Shall I urge you to visit their sad abodes ? No ! your splendid equipages could not pass into their close and foul alleys. Your unaccustomed limbs could not climb the broken steps which lead to their ruinous garrets, or plunge into the damp and noisome vaults, their dismal retreats. You will not therefore visit them ; you cannot visit them. How then shall you stand excused for neglecting your duty ? Hear me ; I will tell you the only mode, nay, (by God's mercy) to the rich, an effectual and acceptable exchange for this duty. Send the blessed commutation of your alms which you *can* bestow, in the place of the good works which you *cannot* bestow. Send them through those hands which are acquainted with the manner of bestowing them to the best advantage, which shall apply them wisely to the relief of the real sufferer, and which shall withhold them from the impostor, whom poverty and idleness has furnished with a thousand arts to deceive you. Send them by your ministers and by your physicians. But if you behold not misery, how shall you be moved to relieve it ? If poverty and anguish plunge into those dark and squalid abodes, where your feet never tread, or fly for refuge only to an hospital which you could not visit—how shall the ministers of the Gospel, or the ministers of health, excite your compassion, and stimulate you to discharge your duty for the relief of that misery which
you

you know not? Will general accounts of the establishment of an hospital for this good purpose awaken your attention to all the necessity of your duty? No! they cannot; they can do nothing equivalent to that necessity. Your own experience of one single case of misery would operate more than all abstract reasoning. It would be more effectual for this good purpose, that you should be brought to look on one miserable neighbour who had been assaulted and wounded, and left half dead, than that you should hear of many. The faithful eyes would urge your duty with stronger persuasion than the most pathetic tale. God who made us has formed the feelings to answer to the vibrations of the senses, and has taught the heart, responsive to the feelings, to unlock the hand. Were there no hospital in this great city, and were all the learned in the arts of healing assembled here in solemn devotion, to deprecate the wrath of God; and that it were *lawful* for them not only to *heal on the sabbath day*, but, like their Divine Master, to *heal in the temple* of the Most High—under these circumstances suppose, at this moment, a single wretch, the martyr of some dire accident, should be carried in among us for relief, his limbs fractured, and his blood streaming from the bier; what heart is there here so in love with Mammon, which would not, if that were necessary to save the wretched sufferer, pour out its treasures; some casting in of their abundance much, and some of their poverty

poverty a mite? who would not spoil themselves of ornaments of jewels of silver, and of jewels of gold, and trash so worthless, when compared with the joy of relieving the sufferer's anguish, or preserving his life? and in addition to our most earnest exertion, should we not call upon him by our prayers, who healeth with his word, and now dwelleth among us unseen?

Be assured ye great and ye wealthy, you lose much of the very feeling of your duty, in being excused from the sight; be assured ye great and ye wealthy, the cause of charity loses much, and the poor, and the miserable, and the wounded lose much, since your eyes do not behold their sufferings. What shall we do in order to compensate for this want of the faithful eye, so injurious to them, so injurious to you. Permit me as an imperfect and feeble substitute to call on your imagination, instead of your eyes, to contemplate the various misery which you are bound to relieve; permit me (but alas! how far, far short of the reality must the effort fall!) to place you again, as I did the last year, by the exertion of your imagination, within the walls of our hospital.

Pass then rapidly through the crowded hall, where the multitudes, who daily throng for relief, oppress and shock you with reeking wounds at the very threshold, and hasten with me to the clean and tranquil wards of the hospital, the abodes of convalescent pain, where dwell the inmates of the hos-

hospital. Has this year presented any new accidents, any new species of misery, any diseases more dire than the former? Alas! the sum of human misery is nearly the same, with small variations of local situation, of constitution, and of age; the same accidents, and the same diseases afflict the human race; aggravated always, in the class of men who flee for refuge within these walls, by the stings of poverty.

Behold this is the hospitable inn, in which so lately your bounty placed the wounded traveller for cure and for repose. His fever is abated, his wounds begin to heal, but still you find him pale and languid, and still you find him looking up for that merciful protection which placed him here.

Behold on the same beds, which your liberal charity provided on the last and on the former years (for now near forty years) lie the miserable successors of the miserable; heirs also of all the anguish belonging to their sad inheritance. Yet do they also inherit the cheering hope, that it will soon be with them as with their predecessors; and that they also shall recover under the same admirable skill, and under the same unremitting and tender care, which, during a series of years, have restored so many of their neighbours to their honest occupations, and to their depending families. Behold then there lie, in mute and patient agony, the Fractures of the various bones of the body;
there

there is laid the strained torture of the dislocated limb; and there the brain itself throbs through the fractured skull of the delirious sufferer. Bloated Dropsy lies there white and languid, patiently accumulating, or waiting to be relieved of his watery load. The agony of the stone, and the wondrous skill of the operator,* there supply confidence and resignation to another tortured patient to abide the dangerous operation.

There cold Palsy shivers: horror creeps over him: his vigorous muscles are struck by the visitation of sudden imbecility: his tingling nerves cease to convey the wonted sensations to his limbs, and cease to keep up the communication with the brain: death, the terrible enemy, hath come in upon him, and hath already cut off the town from the citadel. The lower limbs are separated from the trunk, and all communication is cut off: but still life holds out, and maintains the struggle to the last; resting his extreme hope on the powerful aid of Medicine, allied with Charity timely dispatched to his relief by the King of Kings, by the Lord of Life.

* Mr. Dease, of Dublin, has operated for the stone on above seventy patients, in the various hospitals of the city, with such success, that, of the whole number, only one has died in consequence of the operation, and with such delicate address, that he has usually completed the operation in less than five minutes. He, with other eminent practitioners, devotes much of his attention to the Meath Hospital.

And

And there lies a miserable sufferer rescued from the boiling cauldron, or from the burning fiery furnace—scalded almost to death, flayed almost of his entire skin, having fallen into the teeming vat, into the melted tallow, into the liquid sugar; or scorched, perhaps, to the marrow in his bones, by the burning river of fused metals, in the vast labours of the glowing foundry, of the glasshouse and the forge. Good God! how various, how terrible do thy sudden visitations fall on the industrious mechanics, whose toil prepares the luxuries of the palace: the purple dye, the blazing taper, the polished brass, the brilliant lustre, the mirror of vanity!—whilst the great who enjoy them run no risk. Ah! do they not risk the greater danger of a heart hardened by the deceitfulness of riches, if they turn away from, or neglect the poor mechanic, who suffers by those dire accidents, not agony only, but even the very horrors of the grave; since often the living body becomes, in these cases, the prey of loathsome and vivacious worms, which almost baffle skill and defeat the cure, whilst the sufferer in the midst of life is literally in death?

I will not harrow up your tender feelings, or hurt my own, by dwelling on the deplorable objects of this most christian and admirably conducted charity—I hasten to leave them, and only beg permission to speak of one or two more, which prove the extent, the humane spirit, and the success

success of the good works of this hospital. Sin itself, and dire disease, the consequence of sin, are even not excluded:—Here you may find women, who have been *healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary Magdalen, out of whom went seven devils* (Luke viii. 2.)—*Whose beauty was wasted by a sore disease, whose strength failed, whose bones were consumed.* (Psalms.) Alas! extreme misery and degradation, however deserved, should not be excluded from mercy or relief. Nay, you may here find tender infancy itself, which sinks beneath the load of its father's sins: his sins are heavily visited on the innocent; the opening germ of life is blasted before it even unfolds. The powers of medicine seldom avail where the disease is so deep rooted, innate in the very constitution, and in possession of the very springs of life. The suffering babe soon wings its flight from a bad world, to exchange the bitter wages of sin, from which it derives no guilt, for the joys of Heaven.

Through the divine mercy, in this hospital we may say, to use the words of sacred writ—*All manner of sickness and disease is healed among the people.* (Matt. iv. 23.) The wounded are here made whole; the lame are restored to their limbs; the lepers are cleansed: and such is the glory with which God hath honoured the healing art, within these walls *the blind receive their sight.* For to this most precious of their senses, six patients have

been here restored within these last six months. Can you calculate the joy arising from such a restoration?—They who in long and profound night had groped their uncertain way through the haunts of men, shut out from the various delights of the most perfect of the senses, directed at last, in an happy hour, their dark steps to our hospital; there, by the fine and learned hand of the accomplished operator,* the film was gently removed from their sight; the chearful day was let in upon their gladdened soul; they were born again to the glorious brightness of the sun; their thirsty nerves were blessed, they drank the vivid and various rays of light which convey to the sense the beauteous images of God's fair creation.

If you have hitherto been ignorant, even of the existence of such misery, and of such relief as we have presented before you; if hitherto you have neglected your duty, I trust you will now fulfil it: nay, do more; warn in time those who have absented themselves from the duty they owe here to God and the poor; how shall we excuse those who do not come near the wounded traveller—is it because they turn away from the sight of him—is it because they neither behold his wounds, nor hear his piteous groans?

Lazarus lies at the gate, but Dives dwells far retired in the interior apartments of his palace; he

* Mr. Richards, within the last six months, had successfully operated on six poor patients for the cataract.

hears nothing of the wretched beggar, and when his court echoes to his neighing steeds, and rings with his rolling chariot, which is to convey him forth for pleasure or for pomp, should his eye by accident be offended by falling on the disgusting beggar, he turns his head aside, and is rapidly hurried away from rising reflections, and from the painful sight; and he thinks no more on him, he is occupied with other cares. Should the wounded traveller lie in his way, when the pressing business of avarice and ambition makes his steeds fly, and makes his wheels kindle on the road, the priest and the levite themselves, who looked upon him, and passed by on the other side, have done an act of charity beyond his power, he cannot delay even to look upon him—and he thinks not of him, he knows not his situation, he is occupied with other cares. Let us beware of such ignorance of the miseries of our neighbour; we may be ignorant indeed, but we shall not therefore be excused; we know the judgment of our Lord in the former case, we know his commands in the latter. May we escape through his mercy that dire change, to which the unfeeling Dives was condemned!—and may we be enabled to fulfil with zeal that indispensable duty to the miserable, which he requires as the condition of eternal life!

I have now but to remind you once more of the vast good, which the benevolent exertions of the Governors of our hospital have done, with a
small

small portion of the public alms; hoping that the rich and great, the lords of the earth, will, like the Lord of all, deal with them as faithful servants, and commit into their hands, more liberal powers of extensive good. To what degree of confidence are they not intitled for their faithful dispensation of the small funds of this charity, amounting altogether, within the last year, (I go no farther back) to a sum little more than 300l. No paltry work was here; no mean speculation; the physicians and surgeons, far from any avarice of this kind, have uniformly given up their just right to one third of this little sum; and then, with the blessing of Christ, have, like his true disciples, distributed their own bread and labours of love, almost miraculously, among above eleven thousand miserable. Good God what a multitude! imagine them all present; but what temple of God could contain even the number healed in one month? Yet imagine you could behold them restored to their limbs, to their health, to their precious senses; imagine you beheld this plenteous harvest of good, the work of a few labourers, the wondrous produce of a handful of money; imagine you beheld the joy, and heard the blessings to their benefactors, pouring from the hearts, and rising from the voices of these eleven thousand, up to the mercy seat of God, to be recorded for ever in the book of life. And this is the solemn truth, and no imagination, although they are not assembled—

nay, we confess they cannot be assembled, they are scattered over the whole kingdom, they have resumed their useful occupations, they do not exist as a body of unfortunate. *They have escaped as a bird out of the net of the fowler, the snare is broken, and they are delivered.* (Psal.) They are gone to *declare what great things God hath done for them*; and to publish abroad what power he hath graciously given unto men.—The leper, who had been cast out as unclean, is returned into the bosom of society; the sick has taken up his bed, and departed to his house; the lame man leapeth like an hart, he has bounded over the distant mountains; the deaf has changed the dull blank of universal silence, for the sweet intercourse of the human voice; the blind, who crept hither from the distant county, under the darkness and the shadow of death, expatiates now at large, cheered and guided by the blessed light of the sun. No, you cannot see them as a body of once miserable and unfortunate; you will find perhaps the 11,000 returned into the arms of their families, blessing by their return 11,000 families. You can gratify your good feelings, only by the provision you now make for the similar restoration of the future miserable; and doubt it not, thousands and tens of thousands will implore relief in the course of the current year; misery and death are alike inevitable to man. The full amount will be made up in detail, although the aggregate sum is seldom (ex-

cept in the horrors of war, which may God avert) to be seen at once, for if it were, how should the labours of a few good men prove adequate to their relief?

It is said, that adventurous merchants, when they explore distant and unknown countries, bring with them home specimens of precious commodities, and of jewels and gold, to engage others to join in the profitable commerce; and we read that previous to their entering the promised land, the children of Israel sent to explore its fertility and to spy out the land: *and they came unto the brook of Eshcol, and cut down from thence a branch with one cluster of grapes, and they bare it between two upon a staff.* (Numb. xiii. 23.) Such a cluster was sufficient proof of the fertility of the soil; you perhaps also require of us a specimen of the fruits of our good works. Look yonder then and behold those four—behold there in them the wounded whole, the lame restored to his limbs, the paralytic alive with vigorous nerves, the blind restored to sight.* Is not this cluster a sufficient specimen of the fruit of our good works? Stand ye up and render thanks to God, give the glory due to his holy name, who has thus graciously restored you, and raised up to *you*, the poor and simple, benefactors among the wealthy and the learned.

* Four convalescent patients of this description were on this day placed in the centre aisle of the church.

Stand up, and in the name of the 11,000, of whom you are come here this day the representatives, bless these your liberal benefactors. Invoke the God of mercy, for his mercy upon their heads, upon their city, upon their country, and upon their children, who have shewn mercy upon you, the poor and miserable. I have called you their benefactors, I have called this your charity throughout my discourse: I have made no mistake in this. Their cause hath been often heard in this holy temple; and this is the second time that from this place I have myself been permitted to lift up my cry for their misery before you: neither will it now, I trust, prove more vain, than in its first feeble efforts; your hearts were then moved to a degree of compassion, and your hands were opened with a degree of bounty, which I did not elsewhere experience in the same cause—Do not disappoint me now, do not turn away now from those who (after God) live only by your alms. I know we are not of your parish: I know we have no claim on any parish; we are strangers and aliens to all, but *we have lain wounded and half dead*. This is our claim to the offices of humanity; this you have not rejected, you have adopted us the children of your parish and of your mercy; our wounds have been softened and healed by the balm of your oil; our sinking hearts have been revived by your wine; we have reposed in the comforts of the inn provided for us by *you*; *by you* ye good Samaritans.

In

In part you have already paid our necessary expences, and now are ye returned to thank and to indemnify our kind hosts, and to repay them whatsoever *they have spent more.*

The lame you have restored to their limbs—bless you: the lepers you have cleansed—bless you. The glorious harmony of eleven thousand grateful voices rises up to Heaven to bless you: and the angelic quire answer in responsive blessings, *peace on earth, and goodwill among men.* Christ himself, on the right hand of the father, looketh down upon your good work with complacent love: God himself doth bless you by his most mighty protection abroad and at home, now and ever, he blebseth you in your limbs, in your health, and in your senses here, and when the gate of everlasting life shall be opened, he will crown you with eternal blessings. You shall be admitted whole into his presence; and be placed triumphant on the right hand of your Lord. You have unstopped the ears of the deaf, even of those you have never beheld; then shall your ears be surprized with imputed mercy and righteousness by your Judge:—*Lord, you shall say, when saw we thee an hungred and gave thee meat: but he shall answer, inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me.* Then shall your ears hear these celestial sounds—*Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.* (Mat. xxv. 34.)

You have opened the eyes of the blind ; then shall your eyes, when the film of mortality is removed, be opened to the eternal and unfading joys of Heaven, and behold face to face, the glory of God, blessed for ever ; which blessed consummation and inheritance of eternal life, that we thy faithful people may be found worthy to obtain, by the sincere performance of those works our Lord hath commanded, and by the merits of his blood, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through the same, our blessed Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The collection made on this occasion, amounted to 230l. including thirty guineas sent by his excellency earl Fitzwilliam.

(393)

SERMON XVI.

PREACHED AT

ST. NICHOLAS WITHOUT,

MARCH 22, 1795,

FOR

MR. KIRWAN.

A severe indisposition, attended with alarming symptoms, having prevented Mr. Kirwan from appearing as the advocate for his own parish schools, the author, in the following discourse, lamented the circumstance, and was necessarily led to speak of the great preacher, whose pulpit was assigned to him on this occasion, in terms suited to his own feelings, and he believes to the feelings of the majority of the citizens of Dublin.

His apprehensions have been happily removed.

SERMON

SERMON XVI.

ISAIAH, LVIII. Part of the 6th and 7th Verses.

" IS NOT THIS THE FAST THAT I HAVE
" CHOSEN, TO LOOSE THE BANDS OF
" WICKEDNESS ?

" IS IT NOT TO DEAL THY BREAD TO THE
" HUNGRY, AND THAT THOU BRING THE
" POOR THAT ARE CAST OUT, TO THY
" HOUSE ; WHEN THOU SEEST THE NAKED
" THAT THOU COVER HIM."

IN times less awful than the present, it might be expected, that we should at once enter upon the particular business for which we are assembled. It might be expected, that we should at once go into the cause of these poor children, and endeavour, under their peculiarly destitute circumstances, to recommend them to your merciful protection ; to call upon you to become the fathers of the fatherless, and to guard this little flock, who are scattered like sheep *having no shepherd*. Yet fear not, little flock—the Lord is your shepherd, therefore shall ye lack nothing.

A nearer interest requires our immediate attention. In these perilous times, when every moment

ment teems with great events, we are bound to turn our reflections towards ourselves.

When Israel was threatened with visitations from God for their manifold sins, they fasted and prayed, and exercised every act of devotion before the Most High. This has been the universal practice of all nations: this has been also our practice---and we trust not in vain. But let us recollect ourselves for a moment.

We are now arrived at the midst of that stated and solemn season * appointed among all Christians for considering their situation, with respect to the great concerns of eternity: and but yesterday, as it were, we bowed ourselves before the throne of God in humiliation and prayer, *extraordinary* in their objects, and *extraordinary* in their appointment. And can we shut our eyes upon our private estate, with respect to God, at this solemn season? Can we shut them, and forget the still aggravated cause of our recent supplications for the nation at large, on that extraordinary day? A bloody and destructive war has exhausted our strength and our treasures abroad, even during the rigors of winter; what may we not expect with the opening year? Discontent hath already infected the bowels of the land; what have we not to apprehend should the evil encrease, and should the enemy, which God forbid, invade our

* Mid Lent.

shores? The blackening storm gathers round us from every point in the horizon, and threatens to burst upon us in all its horrors. Who can arrest the desolation if it once begin? Who can divert its destructive course from our prosperous islands? He alone who rides on the wings of the whirlwind; he alone whom the winds and the seas obey—God, alone, can stop his dreadful judgments which are now abroad, and in progress towards us. We cannot stay them, our weak arm can do nothing—our wisdom can do nothing. Wisdom, and policy, and long experience are baffled and defeated: they are as childhood and folly among the unforeseen and imperious events, with which his dark and mysterious vengeance now scourges his rebellious children.

What resource is then left to us? How shall we yet avert his wrath before it fall upon us? Ye wise and ye simple, ye great ones of this world and ye humble, one resource alone is left to us all, if we be not too late; that is, to endeavour, by sincere obedience and by fruitful repentance, to secure the protection of Almighty God; and, above all, to endeavour to deserve it, by exercising such acts of charity towards our neighbour as best resemble that mercy which we stand in need of ourselves. We have then fasted, and prayed, and bowed ourselves down before the Lord: but have we fulfilled the conditions of an acceptable fast, as stated in the language of the prophet,
which

which shall conciliate to us the mercy we implore? *Have we loosed the bands of wickedness? Have we dealt our bread to the hungry? Have we covered the naked? Have we brought the poor that are cast out to our house?* (Is. lviii.) If we have not fulfilled all these conditions, and others which I have not here enumerated, what progress have we made?—Alas! what answer are we prepared to give to such a question?

Are not our people at this moment as if they had never fasted, since that day is past on which they afflicted their soul and bowed down their heads as a bulrush? Do we not behold in private the same levity, the same folly, the same inattention to discern the signs of the times, and the same disregard of those dire judgments, which (but God forbid) may possibly be at our very doors? Do we not behold in public the same——But no, I forbear, I will not speak of the public measures till I am able to speak of them with due respect: the minister of the Gospel is more concerned with the individual and private character: let me speak then only in the words of sacred writ. *Behold in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?* (Is. lviii.)

Gracious God turn not thine all seeing-eye alone upon the iniquities of thy people, and be

not severe to mark what is done amiss! *Rebuke us not in thy sore displeasure; for thou, even thou art to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when thou art angry? When thou art angry all our days are gone.* (Psal.) *We have sinned, we have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments. O Lord righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces as at this day: to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near and that are far off, O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.* (Dan. ix. 7.) Let this but too just parallel relieve me from the painful task of enumerating our public, and even private offences, which provoke the vengeance of Heaven. Let this general confession of our sins suffice for the present, before God and our own hearts, as an acknowledgement of our guilt and submission to his judgments. Let us repose our hopes of mercy on the merits of our Redeemer, since we can expect nothing on our own. O! says Job, *that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth with his neighbour.* It is the high privilege of a Christian, thus to be admitted to plead through our blessed Lord. However sinful, (as we confess ourselves to be) we claim, under his merits and mediation, a value to be set on our imperfect services, which may yet entitle us to the mercy of God. *Blessed are the merciful, says our Lord,*

Lord, for they shall obtain mercy. (Mat. v. 7.)

Yes my brethren, yes my fellow citizens, you have exercised yourselves in works of mercy, not only so exemplary and so splendid, but also with such zeal and constancy, that on this single plea we look up in humble hope to the favour and protection of the Great Father of all Mercies. True it is our sins are manifold, but our persevering charity shall, with its sacred veil, cover their multitude from the eye of Almighty Justice.

This one christian virtue, but this first of christian virtues, heavenly charity religiously exercised, incessantly exercised, and like the soft dews of Heaven descending with abundance and refreshment on every thirsty soul, shall, we trust, be accepted as an atonement for many human infirmities, and many human transgressions.

Look down O merciful Lord graciously upon this thy congregation here assembled for this blessed work. Look we beseech thee mercifully upon this thy city, and thy people, among whom, at this very hour, various congregations are also assembled for this blessed work. Behold, O Lord, thy holy sabbaths are duly and solemnly devoted to this blessed work. The return of thy holy sabbaths is to our frequent to keep pace with the zeal of thy people: the number of thy sabbaths equals not the number of our christian and charitable institutions: and we fear not even the temporary failure of any one good work, except

cept from the temporary interference of another. The full and living fountain of our charity is distributed in a thousand streams over our whole land: copious and incessant it flows through all, it refreshes all; except, when sometimes for a moment, at the various interfections, the rushing tides interrupt each other, and, accumulating, force their passage in greater abundance, through some more favoured or some more thirsty channel. Behold us then O Lord, and let thy mercy lighten upon us. *Let our prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense, and let the lifting up of our hands be as the evening sacrifice.* (Psal.) Let the offerings of our charity be imputed to us for righteousness through Christ, and let our *prayers and our alms come up into thy presence*, as an acceptable memorial of the imperfect services of thy people.

We may be a sinful nation, we may be a foolish nation; yet still we trust we are not so far depraved that the value of our charity shall not be found to compensate for the debasement of our sins and our follies; at least, in his sight, whose property is to have mercy and to forgive. But let us not be vain and presumptuous in our hopes; we are people in circumstances imminently dangerous. Evil Mammon has invaded every heart, though we trust he is not yet in full possession of every heart. He seduces to the love of the world, he stimulates the already ardent desire of gain; he tempts us, as heretofore he also

tempted our Lord, with prospects of the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them, offering bribes to each according to the ruling passion of his soul, if we *fall down and worship him*: promising to us, as he then promised to our Lord, the guardianship of angels, *lest we dash at any time our foot against a stone*. Alas! the enemy hath succeeded better against us, he hath made a deeper impression on our weakness, his temptations have prevailed against our frailty, we have stumbled, if we have not fallen down before or worshiped him. How nearly are we gone? How nearly have we forfeited our allegiance to our Heavenly King? Do we not behold that encreasing depravity throughout all ranks of people, which seems as if we were ready to cast off, though we have not yet cast off the service of God, and to devote ourselves to Mammon?—*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*. (Mat. vi. 24.)

Look upon the insatiable avarice of men, look upon their devoted love of the world, look upon their selfishness and their infidelity—look upon the corruption, the venality, and the dissipation of the higher ranks—look upon the frauds, the idleness, and the irreligion of those below—are we not in danger of God's heavy judgments? Do we not deserve them? Are they not at this moment in fearful progress towards us? And what shall stay them: if the all-seeing eye turn not away from our manifold sins, and fix not itself alone

alone with benign indulgence on our single virtue, our christian charity?

It is true we are invaded by the wiles of Mammon, we are entangled in the snares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches has so grown up with our growth, and so closely entwined itself about the bark, as to render the tree a fruitless stock, as almost to extinguish the vital principle of eternal life. But have we not beheld with our own eyes, and in this very holy temple of God, the rich man bestow his beloved gold upon the poor; hath he not watched here, and attended, and laboured here in the cause of charity---hath he not almost thrust the *camel through the eye of the needle*, and accomplished here, in the presence of his Judge and his Redeemer, the miracle of his own salvation?

It is true we are an unfeeling and a luxurious people: *we wax fat, we shine, we overpass the deeds of the wicked*: (Jer. v. 28.) *gathering where we have not strewed, and reaping where we have not sown*: (Mat. xxv. 25.) hard task masters grinding the faces of the poor, in order that we may dissipate, in profligate expences, the trash we have wrung from the hand of Labour, his hard earnings, the miserable gleanings which he can save from the cravings of exhausted nature; or that, like prodigals, we may waste, in riotous living, the portion we have inherited from our more virtuous ancestors. Yet, have we not seen Profligacy and

Luxury themselves, open their hearts and their hands to their duty, and the call of Charity in the house of God, and for a moment, even though for a transitory moment, called to their proper feelings, and office, have we not seen them become the *good stewards, and dispensers of God's blessings to the poor?*

It is true that *faith and hope* have been failing in the land: they have suffered a dangerous blast from the pestilence sweeping from foreign shores. These lofty and aspiring plants are almost killed in the higher situations—the blast has been most fatal there—the humble vallies, thank God, have yet escaped: but among the great, faith lies almost extinct, a deformed and leafless trunk, without honours, without fruits—and hope itself ever green and flourishing, hope lies almost killed in the horror of the *eternal sleep of death*: but O may the dew of God's restoring grace yet revive them in the hearts of his people! and may they again take *root downwards and bear fruit upwards* to eternal life. Yet though faith and hope do fail, *charity faileth not*; for our Lord hath promised that *charity shall never fail*.—And accordingly we behold flocking to the house of God, on every charitable occasion, those who think not of their other duties here, who abstain unwisely from joining in our common supplications, in our common thanksgivings, in our confessions, and in our hopes of
mercy.

mercy. Yet the very men whose faith and hopes sink beneath the dignity of their calling, are found in some measure restoring themselves to their proper level, by unfailing charity, and vindicating their profession in Christ, by aiding with full hands every pious institution, even those of which the object is to establish in the hearts of the rising generation the glory and the blessedness of that faith, and that hope, of which they feel the want in themselves.

It is true we are a wasteful and a dissipated generation. All that can be procured by every means, can hardly suffice for the profuse extravagance of every rank, and of either sex. The great and the humble, the settled man, and the mother of children, the green boy, and the unmarried virgin, all, all grasp at *silly lucre*, alike insatiable, and dissipate what they obtain, prodigal alike. Ever wanting, ever squandering, they hesitate at no means of acquisition, however disgraceful, however criminal. Corruption and venality in public life, and fraud and dire gaming in private, alternately recruit and exhaust the coffers of the profligate and dissipated people. The laws of God are neglected, the laws of the land are evaded; fidelity and justice are banished; credit is abused in every sense, it is disgrace to those who receive it, it is ruin to those who give.

A false, and hollow, and sounding name of honour usurps the place of all virtues, and truth, and

religion—*honour*, which witholds from justice and from honesty, that which he pays to fraud and villany. This is the principle of the unrelenting and merciless giant Gaming, that insatiable and cruel monster, generated by indolence, and avarice, and extravagance; the produce of fatal and contradictory sins. Alas! what injuries and insults are cast by them on the profession of the Gospel and the hopes of the soul. Leave these dire sins and these destructive vices to the rashness of the great, ye people of the Lord: leave them to the rashness of the men, ye matrons, the glory of our chaste island: let your docile minds be prevailed upon to look again into the laws of God, and to *receive again with meekness, the engrafted word which is able to save your souls*: (Jam. I. 21.) let humble faith and joyful hope again occupy the pure temple of your breasts, and return back to the peaceful circle of domestic duties, which afford the surest earthly delights—your diligence, your œconomy, your sweet occupations, your children and your God. Leave the frenzy of the gaming table to the unconquerable spirit of the stronger sex, and win them back to wisdom and to duty, by your impressive examples. If you think not of yourselves, beware of the examples you give to your lovely daughters, your pride and your hopes; whom you should *breed up in the care and nurture of the Lord*. Ye virgins, follow not the example which *teacheth to err*, whatever respect

respect you owe to the author of such example. Be not ye *the foolish virgins*, take example by *the wise*; waste not idly your precious and transitory youth. Provide yourselves *with oil*: arise, *trim your lamps*; it is midnight: *behold the bridegroom cometh*; go ye forth in time to meet him; *lest the doors be shut*. Watch, *for ye know not the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh*. (Mat. xxiv. 42.)

It is indeed but too true, that the most discordant vices of avarice and prodigality have usurped a cruel tyranny over the minds of every class of people, and find means to reconcile the opposition of their interests through the medium of gaming and dissipation, so as to comprehend within the wide circle of their power, at once the old and the young of either sex.—But let us, after this melancholy acknowledgment, look again for consolation towards that same heavenly virtue, christian charity, which, on its strong and full flowing tide, carries even them towards the house of God: have we not seen dissipation and folly, which had wasted their means of liberality, and impaired their constitutions by late pleasures, shake off their meridian slumbers and hasten to the house of God, to dedicate to the cause of charity the moments stolen from short repose, and the small remnant of their unthrifty savings? Have we not seen Avarice and successful Play themselves sometimes open here those untouched

bags, which had hitherto been exclusively devoted to the demon of chance, and bestow liberally from them more holy offerings to the poor? And that female, who last night, as it were possessed by this demon, brooded so fierce, and wakeful, and disturbed over the dire table, have we not seen, as on this day, approach the temple of God, *healed* by the Holy Spirit of Charity, *restored to herself*, and in her *right mind*? and, recovering miraculously her native and angelic form, have we not seen her stretch forth her hand in bounty to the poor? O how different appears the female form, when possessed by that evil Mammon, and when inspired by the blessed spirit of Charity! How different, when the mind, agitated by unworthy passions, distorts the countenance, and when the soul, touched by compassion, glistens in the eye, and illuminates every feature with benign and heavenly sympathy. 'Tis then indeed women appear on earth the image of that exalted nature to which they are to arrive by works of mercy. But what cannot those works effect, not only for the present reformation of mankind, but for their eternal salvation? Have we not seen every form of human error approach to be healed, and cleansed, and sanctified at the altar of christian charity? Have we not seen Infidelity bestow alms to support Religion? Have we not seen Luxury forget himself, and only feel solicitude for the miseries of Want? Has not *Dives* himself come hither to visit

visit *Lazarus*, and to minister unto him, before the great gulph hath separated them, in good time to prevent the dire change impending over him? Has not Avarice seemed for a moment here to renounce his worship of that golden idol he *has himself set up*, and to turn his bounden service towards the living God? Have we not seen his golden stores unlocked by the heavenly voice of Charity, committed to her without grudging or necessity; resigned up to her treasury in heaven, and glittering on the silver censer, which her pure hand has offered up as an atoning sacrifice on the altar of God?

Thus have I laid before you a slight sketch of that great and saving charity which is exercised at this day among us, which is at once the glory of our nation, and the foundation of our hope in the mercy of God. The occasion of our assembling for the particular purpose of this day, leads me to investigate the causes which appear to have contributed to this high national character, which we vindicate as our own. We ask then, whence have we derived this good report, this glorious renown for charity? Hath it always, as now, formed the distinguishing and established character of our blessed Island? We do believe that in no respect have our people been ever found deficient in obedience to those laws of God, which enjoin benevolent conduct and affections. We do believe that we may justly assume as a part of
our

our national character, an innate tenderness of soul, and lively feeling for the wants and miseries of our neighbour. Yes, they are the native produce of our blessed island. But have they been always equally cultivated and brought to equal perfection? I call your attention to well known facts. Our soil is indeed generous and fertile in such a degree as to be capable of producing in abundance all the christian charities, all the humane virtues. Our climate is suited to cherish and bring them forward in their highest excellence and maturity. But if the cultivation fail in any wise, if it fail in any point of the refinement or consummate art of which it is capable, I speak not of labour, those blessings of the christian world, like the choice fruits of the earth, are not produced in their full abundance and perfection. Laborious industry, and patient *perseverance in well doing*, and knowledge, and the *true wisdom which is from above*, we have never wanted since the first planting of the Gospel in our land. Our ministers have not failed to produce in abundance *the bread of life*, to *feed the whole flock of Christ*. The simplest culture of the earth, but this also the most laborious and the most useful, and the simplest culture of the Gospel suffice (such is the bounty of heaven) to produce and secure the good things of prime and indispensable necessity. But a prosperous, refined, nay, let me add, a worldly and a sensual people require to be stimulated to taste this simple food

food of life, and to eat of this bread and live for ever, by some unusual excitement, by some extraordinary energy of recommendation. Look back a few years upon the annals of the poor; to what can we attribute the amazing deficiency at that time in the alms bestowed for their relief? Was the Gospel less understood then? Were men less christian then? Were the poor then less numerous? We cannot pretend any thing of this kind was the cause. The defect was perhaps alone in the mode of culture suited to bring to their just growth and perfection the generous feelings of the mind. True *the form of sound words* had been inculcated with diligence, with knowledge, and with unaffected piety; but the *tares of the world* had grown up, and almost *choked the good seed*. The cares, and the riches, and the pleasures of life, injured the perfection of the Lord's harvest on earth. It required a strong hand and a bold heart to pluck up their deep roots, for they were considered, perhaps too literally, as not subject to disturbance, till the *final and great harvest*; the worldly required to be roused; the rich to be alarmed by a louder voice; and the torpid insensibility of sin to be restored to feeling, by stronger applications, and by the exertions of a bolder zeal.

It was necessary, that the light, which hitherto, if not hidden beneath a bushel, had not been properly elevated, should be exalted high, to enlighten the whole

whole household of the Lord. It was necessary, that this light should be so elevated as to reach the great, who had hitherto been above the sphere of its influence. It was necessary, that from splendid talents thus raised up the ministers of the Gospel should catch a worthy emulation, and *let their light so shine before men, that they might see their good works, and glorify their father which is in heaven.* (Mat. v. 16.) It was necessary, that splendid talents should kindle the sleeping seeds of native eloquence, to work on native generosity. The flame has been propagated without diminishing the brightness of those talents from which it was communicated, and you now behold your sons and your youth, devoted to the altar of God, blaze around you enlightened, their hearts awakened to a noble emulation, their lips touched with sacred fire. You behold them now vindicate the dignity of our calling, and prove that to the hopes of the Gospel belong not only reason, and sober conviction, and unshaken truth; but that also to the Gospel belong those accomplished arts of persuasion which open the hand and the heart in heavenly charity; as well as the most sublime and magnificent topics of genuine eloquence, calculated to elevate the mind to the grandest heights of terror and delight, before which the lustre of worldly objects is extinguished and lost.

From this period commenced your brilliant career in charity, and your christian example,
which

which astonishes even the known benevolence and the enormous wealth of your sister nation, which spreads wide around the shores of your blessed island a sacred halo, if not visible to the eye of your enemies, at least distinguished by the eye of God, and marked out as the boundary which they shall be compelled to revere.

Before this brilliant period, your charity, though it existed, was not distinguished; its salubrious springs burst up indeed, warm and copious from our generous soil, every where around us. They were known to the poor; in them they had often quenched their thirst, and from them they had often drunk relief from various misery. As yet, however, the favour and protection of the great had not built around them, and covered them in, and digged them deep. But now fashion and favour have united with wisdom and religion to celebrate their powerful virtues, and to distribute them to the poor—now may we sing the song of Israel: *Spring up O well and sing ye unto it: the princes digged the well, the nobles of the people digged it by the direction of the lawgiver with their slaves.* (Numb. xxi. 17.)

I have spoken now of the splendid exertions which we have made in the first of christian virtues. If you permit me on the present occasion, I will yet go a step farther and enquire, what man among us has been chosen to be the
blessed

blessed instrument of exciting this christian spirit to its present exalted height ?

Is there a single person who hears me, that does not now cast his eyes upon those desolate children, and call to remembrance their absent minister ? Have we not witnessed all these, and greater effects of the spirit in which he spake, when the absent shepherd of this little flock has lift up his voice among you, *mourning with those who wept*, and according it to the various cry of misery ? Have we not seen, when he spoke, Apathy, and Fastidiousness, who could not brook the simple detail of the christian's duty without disgust, hang charmed on the eloquence of his tongue ? Have we not beheld the Sottishness and Stupidity of Sin rouzed from their deep lethargy by the thunder of his voice ; and, abhorring for a moment the gross sensuality of the world, hasten to experience the sublime delight of doing good ? Have we not seen Dignity and Power tremble, whilst he has *reasoned of righteousness and temperance, and the judgment to come* : (Acts. xxiv 25.) and in their terror press forward to offer up a hecatomb, as a peace offering to God ? Have we not beheld (a sight hitherto unknown, even now in his absence unknown, though we assemble at his call, for the very cause he has most at heart) the doors of the ever open house of prayer guarded by armed bands, and closed against the rushing multitudes,

titudes?—rushing whither?—To hear him command them, in the name of the Lord, to *cast into heaven's treasury* their *last mite*; to hear him require of them to do that which they yet *lacked for eternal life*, to *sell all* and literally to follow their Lord. But since no temple of God is sufficiently ample to contain them all, they have been necessarily excluded in favour of the wealthy, whose contributions, rare and munificent, more abundantly supply the vast demands of charity. We have seen then, on those days, the wealthy and unfrequent worshipper possess himself of the seat which humble and constant devotion had loved to occupy, regularly hearing the plain and simple word of God, and the steps of which his knees had worn by constant supplications. We have seen them, when excluded, insinuating themselves through every chink, or accumulating on every partition and projection, in God's temple, like the incessant falling snow, or lighting from without, silent and pure, against the windows; we have seen them melt away to the tale of misery, or freeze in horror at the dangers of sin. When he has pleaded for the orphan, have we not heard him connect his cause with all the great duties of men, and the interest of society? But when he hath lift up his powerful voice for the tender and destitute female orphan, what high principle that moves the human affections did he leave untouched? What man, who has heard him demand protection for that sex

to which he owes his existence, has not nerved his arm and stood forward with conscious pride? What man, who has heard him describe the domestic influence of the *household divinity*,* has not, according to his more immediate feelings, stood up to shield, in his imagination, the sister of his affection, the mother he revered, the maid he adored, the wife of his bosom, the daughter of his fondness and his pride? Wherever there dwelt a spark of manhood in the bosom, he roused it into zeal, to protect infant purity and weakness from the contagion of a polluted world. And in pleading for them, he so vindicated the dignity of the sex, that Dullness itself ceased to be insensible, and Profligacy did not dare to scoff: he inspired the breast of manhood with that reverence for the sex which is virtue, with that respect which is domestic peace, with that love in which consist honour, generosity, and courage.

But the powerful exertions which operate those marvellous effects, cannot be made, nay have not been made without injury to a delicate frame and constitution: to such a constitution its own ardent zeal is self destruction, and whilst it coils up its irresistible force, it overstrains, or may snap short the springs of life.

* *Household divinity* was an appellation under which Mr. Kirwan had figured the excellence of a good woman, in his first celebrated sermon for the institution of the Female Orphan-house in Dublin.

The injury has been done, and the fatal effect has almost taken place. Those powerful exertions you have so often beheld from hence, have impaired the immediate organ of the voice, and even of life itself: and now he is compelled to submit to silence and to absence, lest he should speak to you no more. We all witnessed once the painful effects of that great delicacy, and of those powerful exertions—you recollect you were assembled to hear him, but his exhausted breast did not furnish audible sounds to his eloquent tongue. Yes, now recollect the event; recollect the glory of that day; recollect the triumph of that day. You proved on that day the dispositions with which you had approached the Temple of God: you came to listen to the voice of Eloquence, but you came also to *do* the works of Mercy. If you were disappointed in one respect yourselves, you did not inflict your disappointment on others—no, you knew your duty to the orphan, and your upright hearts sought no specious subterfuge to evade it—That is not forgotten to you, your names are sealed among the twelve thousand in the book of life—you were not ungrateful—you bestowed more that day upon his lamented silence, than you had ever before on his most ardent and splendid eloquence. That was a proud day for *him*, it was

E c

a proud

a proud day for you.* Follow up effectually your own great example on *this* day—This day again compelled to be silent, he is obliged to use the feeble substitute of my voice. An arduous task for me, but not to be refused! He has given me in charge to say much to you in behalf of these, his destitute orphans; but I forbear the long detail of his attentions to them, and their various wants; I trust to your own feelings more than to my representations, more than to my solicitations. You know these children depend alone on God and you; you know the zeal of their pastor, and that *he* cannot plead for them with you, who *with you* never pleaded in vain, Give then now in his absence as you gave before on his silent appearance. Give liberally, it may be, but God forbid! for the last time on his account, before he go hence and be no more seen. He must fly from his native and beloved country, the theatre of his well earned praise, the theatre of his wonderful eloquence. But

* In the year 1794, Mr. Kirwan was again to have preached for the Female Orphans, and on the day appointed appeared in the pulpit; but his voice was not audible, and he was unable to proceed in his discourse. There was no sermon on that day, and yet the collection for the charity amounted to upwards of eight hundred pounds.

he asks one boon for these poor children before he departs, and he lingers on your shores in anxious solicitude for the event, hoping you may be disposed thus to gratify the pious wishes of his heart, and thus be forward to remunerate his labours. But your bounty this day may go farther. Give this day liberally, if you wish to restore him to health and restore him to the poor. To the refined soul, the distinguished affection of his fellow citizens is a medicine more powerful to heal, than wells of living waters, or the breezes of salubrious hills.* Perhaps when he is gone, he shall be gone for ever, and the poor shall lose their advocate, the wealthy their monitor, and the nation its pride—Unless the prayers of the poor, and of the orphans, which ascend in clouds of incense to heaven, detain him longer for their protection from his eternal reward; unless your generous affection pour oil again upon the sinking lamp of life. That light alas! that splendid light which was set up to illuminate the Lord's household, consumes away; its own splendor and utility hath wasted it away—it hath burned for your service, but it has burned away to die.

* Mr. Kirwan had proposed to go to Bristol for the recovery of his health.

Yes, I know you will prove yourselves now grateful for mighty services. If to have roused the sleeping virtue of this island in times of peril, so as to engage us in those mighty works of blessed charity, which secure on our side the mercy and protection of the Lord of Hosts—if by the most zealous culture of exalted talents, even to the loss of health, and the imminent danger of life, the great truths of the Gospel have been so enforced as to save even a single soul alive: if to have rescued haughty and presumptuous Sin from the deep abyss on which he tottered blindfold, by plucking boldly the bandage from his astonished eyes: if to have presented then the glories of heaven and the unfading hopes of immortal life to the awakened soul, in colouring the most splendid and just, in language irresistible, in words of fire: if this be any praise, you cannot be ungrateful, you cannot be negligent, you cannot forget him who deserves all this. He is absent indeed, and on the bed of sickness, and you may never see or hear him more; but the Lord himself, your Saviour and your Judge, whose faithful servant he has been, is present in the midst of you, beholding your labours of love, beholding these Orphan Children now committed to your tender care, beholding the works of your hands and the thoughts of your hearts, and imputing to you righteousness towards himself,

self, as you shall discharge your duty towards them. The balance trembles in the hand of eternal justice, and a single act of charity cast into the scale may cause it to preponderate in eternal mercy towards this city and this nation.

the as you find things your duty towards
them. The balance remains in the hands of
the donor and a large part of the money
into the treasury can be used to purchase
the things which are needed for the city and the

SERMON XVII.

Preached at ST. MARY'S, DUBLIN, April 19, 1795, for the
DISPENSARY of ST. MARY'S, and ST. THOMAS and ST.
GEORGE.

PSALMS, xxxix. 6.

“ BEHOLD THOU HAST MADE MY DAYS AS
“ IT WERE A SPAN LONG, AND MINE
“ AGE IS EVEN NOTHING IN RESPECT OF
“ THEE, AND VERILY EVERY MAN LIV-
“ ING IS ALTOGETHER VANITY.”

HUMAN life, under its most favourable circumstances, and when prolonged to its utmost extent, is vain and transitory. But when compared with the duration of the Eternal Being who has given it, it is indeed reduced as it were to a spark, which is extinguished at the moment of its production. But let us repeat the just and beautiful images of the Psalmist. *Behold thou hast made my days as it were a span long, and mine age is even nothing in respect of thee, and verily every man living is altogether vanity.* We are not called upon for any laboured argument to prove the truth of these observations. Daily experience impresses on the minds, even of the most inattentive, the

necessity of acknowledging the vanity of human life. The first truth we learn after our birth is that we are to die, and perpetual examples are held before our eyes, which confirm us in the assurance of this truth previous to the awful proof we are ourselves destined to give. I would to God we were as attentive to the just consequences of the inevitable frailty of our lives, as we must be persuaded of the truth of their frailty. But men have by nature, not only the power of perceiving the truth and acting agreeably to its consequences, but also of shutting their eyes against it, and of acting altogether absurdly. Hence we shall see men who are certain of death, conducting themselves as if they were never to die: and men who may be assured of the truth, appearing as if they were certain of the contrary. Let it not be our reproach to live so unwisely; but having seen the truth, let us turn towards its light, and let us guide our steps accordingly.

But life is not only vain and transitory, it is also uncertain and subject to many evils. The thread of human existence may be snapt short by a thousand interruptions, which shall not suffer its limited and brief span to run to its whole extent. The feeble stream of human life in its short course may be disturbed and embittered by a thousand woes even before it reaches the ocean of eternity. Health which gives its highest and longest duration to the transitory gift of life itself, may

may be lost by various maladies—and then all is but labour and sorrow, even previous to the unpleasant days of old age, and the natural approach of death. The Psalmist, with the pathetic strain of eloquence so peculiar to him, thus deploras those evils in the passages after the text, mingling with his lamentations a fervent piety and reliance on God's mercies. *Take away thy plagues from me, I am consumed by means of thy heavy hand. When thou with rebukes dost chasten man for sin, thou makest his beauty to consume away like as it were a moth fretting a garment: every man therefore is but vanity. Hear my prayer O Lord, and with thine ears consider my calling, hold not thy peace at my tears. For I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner as all my fathers were. O spare me a little that I may recover my strength before I go hence and be no more seen.* (Psalms.)

Such is the nature of human life, and all men agree, that two of its distinguishing characters are, that it is transitory and subject to evil. But men are also agreed in another opinion concerning human life, perhaps even more universally than in the former two; and that is to estimate their evil and transitory existence here, as the most highly valuable of all their possessions. Our mere animal efforts to preserve life, are carried to our utmost power—we grasp at every shadow to sustain ourselves, and we struggle till the last vital spark,
which

which has circulated through our whole frame, becomes extinct.

In opinion, as well as in effect, all men submit to a level uniformity, perhaps upon the value of life alone. The infidel, whose hopes look not beyond the narrow boundaries of this mortal life, whose prospects appear to be for ever closed by the dark shadow of death and eternal sleep, must wish, however he may conceive that he has acquired possession of this transitory boon, to retain it to the last, because having once lost it he can cherish no hope that it shall ever hereafter be restored to him again. The enlightened Christian who has learned from God's unerring revelation that he shall hereafter live for ever, may perhaps be supposed to hold cheap this passing life—but not so—he knoweth that the complexion of his eternal life depends upon his exertions during this transitory life, in which alone he can *work out his salvation, for the night cometh when no man can work.* Time is to the Christian the price of eternity, and every hour is to him inestimable, which may be applied to secure his purchase; every hour which may afford him occasion to resist a single temptation or opportunity to repent of a single sin. These inducements to the love of life affect alike all classes and all descriptions of mankind: the great and the humble, the rich and the poor—The preservation

vation of life is an object of the highest importance to all, in every possible view, whether we consider mere temporal concerns, or stretch our hopes to the vast concerns of eternity.

The other various possessions on which men set a value are distributed unequally, they are transferable and admit of accumulation. But the inestimable gift of life God hath dealt out with severe and perfect justice. To each man he hath given one transitory and irrecoverable mortal life, and in this one precious possession, the poor and the rich, the humble and the great, are equal. Of this precious possession no avarice or power can hoard up a treasure: the monarch and his slave have each only one—of which indeed they may rob each other, but cannot by their crime enrich themselves. The lambent flame of human life may indeed be rudely extinguished: but it may also burn down till the expiring vapour hovers over the last fuel which has been its support, and then it flies upwards to those regions whence it was originally kindled. Many are the unforeseen accidents which thus rudely extinguish human life before its natural period: and many are the favourable circumstances which are required to foster and cherish its tender flame, till the lamp of nature is exhausted.

Life we have said is distributed among men with equal hand: but the means of preserving life, and of guarding against those evils which afflict

or

or destroy it, are bestowed most unequally. And here I earnestly request you to recollect the particular object of our assembling here this day, in the presence of Almighty God. The rich and the great possess the means of preserving life and of alleviating its evils—the poor are destitute of all. Their mutual condition, it must however be confessed, in these respects, is much equalized by their manner of applying the blessings God has entrusted them with for the preservation and comfort of life. The rich convert the very means of preserving life into its more speedy destruction, by their sensuality, their indulgence and luxury. Whilst the poor establish their strength and vital vigour by that labour and temperance which they cannot avoid. The former, if they have in their hands extraordinary defence against the common enemy, Death—render themselves also more vulnerable to his attacks, by wantonly exposing to him more frequent opens—and are oftener endangered by their exciting against themselves a greater number of enemies, in the diseases which are the consequences of Luxury, and the grand auxiliaries of Death. Wealth is a strong city with extensive outworks difficult to guard, which becomes the first object to the invading enemy—poverty is the humble cottage, or the naked village, which he passes over.

But still there are also many diseases which labour and temperance cannot alone guard against,

and which assault unprotected poverty with irresistible violence. Diseases of this nature arise from the necessary circumstances attending poverty, and which principally take hold on it in great and crowded cities: from foul and confined air, from cold and uncomfortable habitations, from bad clothing and want of those frequent changes which highly contribute to the health of those who can afford them—from spare and meagre diet, and from unwholesome or sedentary occupations; for however temperance and labour prevent the tribe of diseases arising from indolence and repletion, and the speedy destruction which they bring on human life; yet are not all temperance and all labour healthful; abstinence and bad food bring on their own diseases, and hard labour breaks down the springs of life. So that with respect to the means of preserving the precious treasure, *life*, the balance, with all their excess and intemperance, is infinitely in favour of the wealthy and the great.

What then is the common Father of All to be accounted in effect partial and unjust, if not as to the possession he has given to his creatures of their lives, at least as to the means he has afforded for their preservation? Are then riches indeed to be considered an invidious distinction, and the ground of well-founded jealousies among the children of men? We will not presume to judge so rashly; God has indeed divided worldly comforts unequally,

equally, but that inequality is appointed in wisdom. He has entrusted to *some* men the distribution of some part of his blessings; such part as his wisdom saw might be confided to frail human stewardship: that the rich may by imitating his bounty and justice earn for themselves the love of the poor, and the blessing of him who was ready to perish: that so the whole family of men on earth may be united by mutual wants, and by mutual benefits. Riches in the state is the father, of whom Poverty is the *child*, protection and dependance, affection and reverence, are their proper mutual sensations and sentiments. Riches were bestowed to bring down blessings upon the head of him that gives, as well as of him that receives. Riches, properly applied, are the great bond of social love, and the great means of exercising every christian virtue. But they have their temptations also—they have their dangers—in the possession of the unwise they seduce sensuality, they swell the pride of man, they harden his heart, and pervert his mind so far as to mislead him to think only of himself, and to neglect the poor. Whilst in health, he riots in all excess and luxury, insensible of the hunger of the poor: and when sickness, the well earned price of his intemperance, invades him, all the sources of health, and all its fresh springs, seem to be opened for him alone, as if again to insult neglected poverty.

Cast your eyes upon that splendid palace, contemplate the apparatus and circumstances of the indisposition of its wealthy lord—tread softly over the smooth pavement, behold how the straw, which would afford comfort and furnish beds to many a poor man, is lavished beneath the chariot wheels, which press to the gate with a thousand anxious enquirers. Knock gently, the muffled stroke will soon be answered by the watchful and learned porter: learned in every circumstance of his lord's disease, instructed in every change, from its causes and its appearance to the crisis, and the expected termination, and all the gradual progress of his tedious convalescence. Behold the profusion of drugs, the precious phials, the cordial draughts, the refrigerants, the restoratives that pour in for his relief: the potent medicines of all the regions of the earth collected in the extreme Indies, in the east and in the west, culled and chosen by the hand of wisdom from the repositories of the most perfect. Behold how all the learning and all the science of the faculty of medicine attend in order, and explore the pulse, and watch the countenance, and enquire into the effects of the prescriptions of their united skill. Behold how all the resources of wisdom and of wealth are called forth for this hour—behold the deep consultations which are rewarded with hoarded gold—behold how the steeds fly, and how the pampered domestics watch and run.—Nothing is omitted
that

that wisdom and experience can suggest, and nothing is left undone that gold can effect: and all is but little to save the precious life; if the precious life can be saved by all.

Now let your imagination transport you to a scene which few of you have probably ever witnessed. Let your imaginations look back at those times when you had no advice or medicine provided for the poor. Go along with the minister of God in his daily attendance in your parishes, visit with him the bed of the poor sick artisan, or the reduced roomkeeper. Follow the labouring minister of the Gospel who is called to the poor man's bed, at once for the relief of his body and his mind:—Alas! he has little besides his prayers to give, yet he gives of that little—he is skilled only in the medicine of the soul, or if he add to his profession some other knowledge, he can be of small service, since he is called upon only in the last extremity. You were never in the habitations of the poor, your splendid equipages could not enter the close lanes and alleys, in which they are collected, in health and in sickness, in wretched apartments, pressed together, and breathing contagion. There, no longer now able to struggle with his malady, lies subdued, and unable to help his family or himself, the industrious and ingenious artisan. *His head is sick, his heart faint, from the crown of his head to the sole of his feet there is no whole part in his body.* What is his com-

complaint? He knows not, neither does his miserable wife, nor his helpless and terrified children. What is the resource, if we suppose the assistance and advice are not to be had which you are called upon this day to provide for the sick poor? The miserable wife flies out to seek the advice and assistance of Ignorance—she tells her neighbours her husband is sick, and asks relief, not knowing either the name of his disease or the nature of the remedy. The pious ignorance of her neighbour furnishes her with some nostrum at enmity with life; with some nauseous recipe to violate the irritability of the sick stomach, and jar the trembling nerves; which proves an impediment to the efforts of nature, which quenches the sinking embers of life. But it is a nostrum of some reputation, for some have taken it and recovered. The poison had not always killed—some cases and some constitutions had not found it fatal. This, with ignorance, had given the drug renown—and with this, in joyful confidence and full faith, with blessings on the bestower's head, the innocent wife hastens home to *cure* her beloved husband; her children's and her own sole dependance and support. Alas! it proves no *cure* to him; except that it hastens his departure to that blessed state, wherein his widow and his orphans will now alone hope for repose from the miseries of life.

The fever has seized another of your ingenious artificers; the fever is his disorder, it is but too well known. His head, his haggard eyes, his parched tongue, his throbbing pulse all indicate his disorder: Ignorance, armed with a lance, again deprives society and his destitute family of ingenuity, and industry, and worth. The morbid blood flows from the breathed vein, even whilst the purple tide of life is ebbing beyond the lowest mark; even whilst the pulse is sinking, and when, to restore the scarcely beating heart to its healthful office—cordials the most powerful should have been poured in; when the fainting patient should have been stimulated into life, by the richest juices of your most generous wines, and regulated by the most attentive vigilance of consummate wisdom and medical experience. But generous wines, and choice medicines, and the art of physic, are reserved for prosperity and wealth alone.

By what title are they reserved for you, ye wealthy and ye prosperous? Why does Experience unlock his treasures of wisdom, and why does Art exhaust his resources only for you? Why does Botany collect the virtues of her herbs alone for you? Why is the earth searched, and its very bowels scrutinized alone for you, to obtain for you the gold, and the more precious minerals which Chemistry sends out from his furnace, prepared

pared to combat and subdue all the obstinacy of your most inveterate and dire diseases? Why are you wrapped up in purple and fine linen, and laid on silk and down, upon your slightest indispositions, all breathing silence and tranquillity around you? Why is all this for you, and more than we can enumerate, whilst the poor man is destitute of all, and feels the pangs of his disease aggravated by every circumstance of cold, and nakedness, and want around him?

Put the question home to your hearts and understandings—wherein do you deserve more than the neglected artisan? Perhaps in your wealth alone. Are you more useful to society, are you of more value to your depending families, who, next to God, look up to you for daily bread?—Are you more temperate and virtuous? Whence has your disorder been derived? Hath it come upon you by the visitation of heaven, and hath it unnerved your hand in the midst of your honest employments and your useful labours? Or have not intemperance, and repletion, and bad passions brought on the disease? The wound under which the rich man labours—from what accident did it arrive, in what duty was he serving God and his country when he received it? Ah! no, it was in no service of this kind; some private quarrel, some false honour, some angry vengeance or thirst of a neighbour's blood, and violation of

the laws of God and man, have stretched him upon his bed, wounded, instead of his more guilty adversary.

Here again turn your thoughts to the condition of the ingenious and industrious poor. He is liable not to sickness alone, but he is subject to a thousand dangers and accidents to which the wealthy are little exposed. The house in which he resides is ruinous, its inhabitants are numerous, its construction is slight, and it falls on the first agitation of a storm, or it blazes by the first accidental carelessness of a child. Laborious exertions often strain his joints, he suffers from his perilous occupations, dangerous machines oppress him; and when not enabled by the bounty of the rich to obtain the assistance of the skilful operator, he languishes under the encreasing evil of a wound, or his sound juices corrupted by sedentary employments to which he is chained by necessity, he becomes at last a burthen, instead of a support to his family.

Are there no adequate remedies for these evils which afflict the poor? Can there be devised no compensation, which may better equalize their condition with the envied state of the wealthy? Yes, the means are in the hands of the wealthy, for the relief of the poor; and it is the will of God that they should be applied to this benevolent purpose—it is his will that they, on whom he has
bestowed

bestowed comforts and abundance and many resources, should impart to those from whom he has withheld all these things; that they should share their comforts, and obtain the assistance of their physicians for the poor; that is in other words, that the rich should establish dispensaries for the poor, and that they should adequately support those which are established: great benefits and wonderful relief are procured from slender funds by the establishment of dispensaries for the poor.

The establishment of public dispensaries is a public blessing, less difficult to support, and perhaps more extensive in its use, than even hospitals themselves: many persons who require the charitable aid of medical relief are, from their peculiar circumstances or cases, unfit objects for hospitals: I mention only one most common complaint, which is not proper to admit into an hospital, fevers—particularly those of the malignant kind, which would probably spread with rapidity through the wards of convalescents, perhaps just recovering from other species of disorders, or from accidents, and defeat the purposes of those admirable and necessary institutions. Many complaints also requiring charitable medical or surgical assistance are not only better relieved in the patient's own home, where he may obtain the attentions of his family, but many even permit a

degree of labour or superintendence, beneficial to the support of a family. Your own judgment and feelings will suggest to you instances of cases of this kind. But some persons there are who, from the peculiar circumstances of their situation, cannot become the inmates of your hospitals. To these the benefits of your dispensary have been extended; to those whom you little suspect to be objects of your bounty.

I have to present before you two cases of this nature, furnished to me by one of your benevolent physicians, who has most humanely undertaken the christian office of bestowing a considerable portion of his time and talents, to the relief of the sick poor of your parishes. Wealth and ease imagine they shall enjoy perpetual sunshine: but alas! all is uncertain in this life: adversity lours, and storms beat upon that head which had hitherto held itself erect in society; and it is beaten down like a bruised flower, soiled and stripped of its honours, and never again is able to raise itself up from the earth: yet still some remembrance of former things remains, some spirit remains whilst still it lasts, and some resemblance of its original form. This is human nature. Two cases of this kind I have told you have been furnished to me by one of your benevolent physicians, but you shall have them from his own immediate authority, and in his own words.

“ I com-

“ I communicated to you, according to promise, the particulars of some of those cases in which our dispensary has afforded assistance and relief to persons who *could* not become objects of *public* charities: it is not an easy matter to make any selection that would answer your benevolent purpose, notwithstanding the variety of distress and sickness which we daily encounter; there is a sameness in the excess of misery and disease that renders it difficult to discriminate or to separate any one instance from the many; however there are two which, from a previous knowledge of the parties and their circumstances, made a deep impression on me; these I shall mention.

“ One instance is that of a merchant in this town, who had lived in affluence, and educated a number of daughters in the genteel style; some disappointments in trade literally broke his heart, and he left a helpless family; this family indebted for their support, partly to their own industry and partly to the liberality of some friends, have often received the benefit of medicines and attendance from the dispensary---I am satisfied this unfortunate family would rather have perished, than submitted to solicit admission into an hospital.

“ The other was the case of a man with a large family, who had lived in opulence, kept a carriage with suitable appointments, (I speak from my own knowledge) was in the commission of the

peace for one of the most opulent counties in the kingdom, and was beloved and respected by all who knew him. This man, either through the ignorance or dishonesty of an attorney, was stripped of all his property, and with a family of twelve children, was forced to take refuge in this town, and endeavour to procure the necessaries of life for his family by writing as a hackney clerk for half a guinea a week—His constitution was not proof against confinement and *mental* disease; he became consumptive, and communicated this deplorable disease to his wife and eldest daughter, who were his constant and only attendants. During a long attendance on this family, for this complaint and other incidental illnesses, I had frequent opportunities of knowing their inability, not only to pay for medicines, but even to procure the common and indispensable necessaries of life—these people were in every respect improper objects for an hospital—they could not beg, and if their distresses were not made known, must have literally starved. In these instances, although medical aid could contribute very little, yet it might be of service to have their wants and their distresses faithfully represented by the attendant physician, to those who were willing and able to relieve them. Besides, although medicine may be unnecessary in these deplorable cases, wine
and

and other cordials are not; and the liberality of the governors has enabled me to dispense these as the different diseases or circumstances of the patients may require."

This good you have done, and more than this, by your dispensary: and be assured it is solemnly registered in the book of life, for your justification on that great day, when you shall render up account of the application of your talents to your Lord and your Judge—when the poor man who has given a cup of cold water only, in the name of Christ, to his poorer brother, shall account for his one talent: and when the rich, who have established hospitals with no unsparing hand, and have supported dispensaries for the poor, shall render up their blessed account of ten talents. On that day, which to every man commences with the close of life, *for then the night cometh when no man can work*—on that great and terrible day—who shall be able to stand in judgment, who shall be clear when he is accused, if his works of charity veil not through Christ the multitude of his sins? O shall we not then think that the sordid Mammon of this world was wisely and well bestowed to heal the sick, to relieve the prisoner, to feed the hungry—when awakened from the short slumber of death, by the awful sound of the last trumpet, we rise to judgment, henceforth to die no more? When
amazed,

amazed, doubting, trembling, conscious of the multitude of our transgressions, overwhelmed by the guilt of our sins, we stand disclosed before the Searcher of Hearts, in dread of the tremendous and final sentence—when the black page is open, on which all our misdeeds are written and are exposed legible to our own and every eye, as we see them now in our hearts; and when notwithstanding our self condemnation, finding ourselves placed on the right hand of our Heavenly Shepherd, and hearing his voice, we shall almost suppose eternal wisdom has erred with respect to our unworthiness—and we shall begin to say unto our Lord—*When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee; or when saw we thee sick or in prison, and came unto thee?—and the king shall answer and say unto us, verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

Pour out then your alms not sparingly now, not grudgingly or of necessity, whilst you have time, and before this transitory life is passed; that on that tremendous day you may find them laid up for you in heaven, and that God may love and reward you then, through the merits of Christ, and far, far beyond your desert. Be wise now therefore, and remember the poor, open your hands

hands and your hearts to relieve sickness and misery.

That your works of mercy now may bring down upon you the mercy of God, and that hereafter they may be crowned with eternal rewards, through our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

hands and your hearts to relieve

There you work; I am very new here, I am

100-443887-100

SERMON XVIII.

Preached at the beginning of the YEAR.

PSALMS, XC. 12.

“ SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS,
 “ THAT WE MAY APPLY OUR HEARTS
 “ UNTO WISDOM.”

THE title of this Psalm in the ancient version is, *A prayer of Moses, the man of God.* If we examine it as it stands in the sacred text, even without considering what might have been the immediate occasion for his composing it, we find it abound with instruction of constant and general use. It consists of a train of reflections upon the shortness and uncertainty of human life, conceived in the highest spirit of piety. From a grateful remembrance of God's mercies, and a sublime description of his eternity, a striking and beautiful transition is made to the sinful and dependant state of man, and the short term of his existence. *Lord thou hast been our refuge from one generation to another. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world*
were

were made, thou art God from everlasting—a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday. To the goodness and eternity of God are contrasted our sinfulness and passing days in the following reflections:—*Thou hast set our misdeeds before us, and our secret sins in the light of thy countenance: when thou art angry, all our days are gone.* The shortness of their duration is compared to a tale that is told, to grass in the morning green and vigorous, in the evening cut-down, dried up and withered; and to sleep, that seems to unite distant parts of time, as it were forgotten itself. To these comparisons is added this pathetic description of the age of man. *The days of our age are threescore years and ten, and though men be so strong that they come to fourscore years, yet is their strength then but labour and sorrow,—so soon passeth it away and we are gone.* We want no subtle or ingenious argument to prove the truth of these reflections. Daily experience stamps the reiterated impression deep on the most inattentive minds. The instruction to be derived from, and the prayer to be addressed to God upon, the contemplation of these truths, follow in the words of our text:—*So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.* Our reflections are carried still farther, when we consider the occasion of this psalm and this petition.

It

It was composed by Moses when the house of Israel had sinned in the wilderness, and had provoked God to pass this sentence of his vengeance upon them; that, in about forty years, all, except only Caleb and Joshua, should die in the wilderness and never see the promised land. The psalm in this view appears the effusion of a just and pious mind, full of the Majesty of God, and labouring under a strong sense of the severity of the merited punishment. Narrow as the compass of human life is, it seemed reduced by this denunciation, for its term was decided. It is the nature of the imagination to magnify either space or duration, of which it sees not the precise bounds; and because they may be, it is prone to think they must be, great. Whereas when the eye perceives or the mind knows the exact termination of the prospect, the magnifying propensity of the imagination is checked, and its ardour extinguished by the unyielding certainty. Forty years is a term longer than most men have reason to expect; but being unchangeably fixed and known, it seemed to the Israelites near at hand. Futurity to a limited being appears distant and interminable only because a mist hangs over it that prevents us from seeing the nearest and perhaps the most ghastly objects. Though we know we must die, yet we proceed in life little affected

affected by the thought of Death so long as we know not when we shall meet him: the flattering hope of existence encourages us still to look forward; but if the mist were removed that hides his unwelcome sight, whether distant or near, we should shudder at every approach.

What must have been the feelings of a whole people, who saw death advancing upon them every hour, with the additional sorrow of knowing they should never see the promised land, the hope of which had engaged them to encounter the dangers of the wilderness, and seemed to be their chief support? It was vain to combat the irrevocable sentence, vain to endeavour to forget it. It could neither be reversed nor escaped; it could not be forgotten. Repentance alone was left them, and resignation to the divine will, lest possibly the obstinate should be cut off long before the term of forty years. Under their circumstances, whose days were numbered, the prayer of the text gives the best advice: religious wisdom could alone strip the encroaching enemy of his terrors, and prepare them to meet him with becoming fortitude.

Perhaps in this our mortal state, we enjoy no greater blessing from the goodness of God, than the ignorance of our latter end. To balance the dreary assurance that we shall soon be no more, which we learn from reason and experience,

experience, we have from nature a strong desire of life, and a strong propensity to think we shall live still longer, even to the last moment. And, had we not this support, life encompassed with all its dangers had been a painful present; to the enjoyment of it perhaps it is necessary, that we should be prone to estimate our security beyond the just valuation. But were we even assured of possession during some certain term, were the precise number of our days reckoned out to us, we should be more unhappy, and lose most of the ardour that impels us in, and sweetens, the necessary pursuits of life. Knowing that the dearest connections of society must be broken to ourselves and others at a determined period, we should begin to loosen them early, to prevent the shock of a sudden separation, or never perhaps indulge in them throughout the whole of our lives. Friendship and every kind affection of the mind would be chilled by the assurance of a short duration: and, from the same causes, selfishness and every base unsocial weed of the mind would derive a sort of negative encouragement, if not a positive and cherishing support. Malice would be gratified in foreseeing the speedy dissolution of worth, or Envy would swell at the prospect of his long life. Villany would commit crimes without fear of punishment, and Despair would be enflamed and confirmed by

inevitable certainty. History furnishes many examples of the ill effects, that even an imaginary knowledge of the term of existence has wrought in men, when they have derived either hopes or fears from divination, oracles, or other absurd arts of exploring the dark secrets of futurity.

But although God has not, in his wrath, numbered our days to us, we are not the less concerned in the prayer of the text. It is indeed true we do not know the precise term of our lives—but are we sure of any term? Some of us may yet live forty years; but ere forty years how many of us shall be numbered among the dead! Might we not apprehend in a much shorter term? I will not give you the pain of conjecturing how rapidly that awful hour may overtake our heedless steps. That is not necessary; but from this moment it is necessary that we prepare for it. And may God assist our good resolutions with his grace, vouchsafe us all yet a sufficient time to finish our great work, and preserve and continue to us long the blessing of our present health!

But though it would be useless and is impossible for us to number our days that lie yet obscured in futurity, we can literally number those that are past, and derive thence much religious wisdom. Our wish to pry into futurity is not
con-

confined to the mere desire of enquiring into the number of our days, we are anxious to know also what events are to attend on them; the knowledge of both, as it might hurt us, is kindly and wisely denied; but the length of the past and the events that accompanied it are both in our power to recollect, because both may be attended with advantage in the recollection. In this light I now intend to consider our present subject. And I am induced to indulge the reflections which this view excites on account of the present season. For it seems to me, that there are some seasons which invite the mind to indulge its propensity (were that possible) to look forward, or rather call upon it more wisely, to turn its retrospection on the past.

Time, which brings about regular and successive changes of seasons, seems thus to provide, for the thoughtful mind, certain elevations, whence it may contemplate the surrounding prospects. The succession of days and nights, the changes in the seasons, their return in the course of a year, are so many periods that awaken thoughtful reflection. And besides these natural divisions, the mind accommodates itself to others artificial or accidental. It is apt to rest a moment with retrospective thought, or to send forth its hopes to explore futurity on the successive returns of the day that gave us birth; to delay at

the stages that bring us from childhood to youth, from youth to manhood, from manhood to old age. The unforeseen events of life often engage the mind in reflections of this nature. Unexpected good fortune produces sometimes this effect—but calamities of every kind, loss of friends, of health, of substance, or the sudden approach and apprehension of dissolution, seldom fail to awaken all our attention. Our attention should indeed be always awake, to consider our circumstances at every step. But we are not often so diligently inclined, as to take careful note of the smaller portions of the flying time. We do not balance our accounts hourly, or perhaps daily; weeks, months it may be, elapse unnoticed; but the close of the year calls loudly upon us to consider the state of our important concerns. At this period are we now arrived, we have just closed the old year, we have just begun the new. Let us stop here a moment, and instead of prodigally looking forward to squander what may yet remain to us of life, let us cast our eyes back on our great account, numbering the days that are past, and learn from the recollection frugality, wiser for the future.

Another year is gone! The short term of our lives is reduced by the revolution of another entire year! Year after year glides away, and
pushes

pushes us insensibly upon the very verge of eternity! How have we been employed, what have we been doing through the whole of our lives to this present hour? Many no doubt have toiled to attain, and *have* attained the comforts and elegancies of life, many inherit and enjoy them all without a serious thought of any thing. But has no provision been made by sober reflections, by benevolent actions, by works of piety, for the great concerns of another life? Has the last year slipped through our possession like the former—unprofitably for that unchangeable estate; perhaps more than unprofitably? Let us recollect—happy those whom the retrospection does not reproach, does not dismay! If any wince, if any shrink from it, let them in a happy hour, before it be too late, repent for the past and and resolve for the future.

Reward or punishment we know awaits us in the immortal life we go to after this. Most men are assured of this truth. Yet how inconsequently do most men act. It would almost seem they make a jest of their faith, or with amazing inconsistency and inverted desire pursue rather their misery, than their happiness.

But this unnatural paradox may be thus resolved:—men are deluded by false measures of present happiness; their passions betray them; their days are not rigidly numbered to them, and they

they reckon upon a long life, at a distant period of which they will prepare for the future, the interests of which they erroneously consider to be incompatible with the present. How difficult is it to undeceive ourselves in the too eager expectations we indulge of long life? No experience of the fate of others seems to call even a transitory attention to ourselves. Or though we may acknowledge the frailty of life, we act as if convinced it was unchangeable. Nothing can prevent us from building on the hollow foundation of our fond hopes, even while we see thousands of ruins sinking about us unfinished, and many swallowed up before their splendid and mighty plan was elevated above the surface of the ground: because some few do stand for a season, we each assure ourselves our own must. Nay it would seem, the longer experience we have had in others of the uncertainty of life, we become the more absurdly secure of ourselves—since it is not uncommon to see Old Age and Infirmary, whilst the grave opens under their very feet, harden in vain hope, and engage in temporal projects, which, without a miracle, they cannot live to accomplish. With respect to futurity we act at all ages like children, we think a few years will never be past. We look at what is to come through the end of the perspective that throws the nearest objects to an im-

menſe diſtance. But circumſtances ſtill more extraordinary ſeem to attend a review of the paſt. Some of us are already far advanced in years, ſome arrived to maturity, ſome are ſtill reckoned in the full vigor of youth, and more perhaps only now approach that envied and grateful ſeaſon. And yet the principal events, or what can be remembered of the longeſt lives, are ſo quickly run over, that the momentary retroſpection ſeems to reduce their duration to ſo little as to exceed the ſhorteſt by a very triſle. The perſpective of the memory is the reverſe of that by which we view futurity; it has the ſtrange property of drawing all things almoſt equally near. In truth, the ſhort life of any human being here bears ſo contemptible a proportion to our exiſtence for ever, that the inequality of the longeſt or the ſhorteſt hardly merits to be otherwiſe eſtimated; they are no more than leſs or bigger drops alike ſwallowed up and loſt in the ocean of eternity.

Why then ſhould we miſpend this little portion of our exiſtence meant for our probation—for living ſo, we do not obtain even the tranſitory happineſs we deſire, whiſt we run the moſt dangerous and unequal hazard of eternal miſery? Even in this little portion we have no ſure moment, not one that we can call our own, beyond the preſent, to prepare for the inevitable change that every hour encroaches upon us. We are
not,

not, I trust, still to learn how necessary such a preparation is—but perhaps it may be a painful task. We imagine it more so than it is in reality. Whatever be the distance of our wanderings from wisdom and virtue, half the difficulty of a return is overcome at the very first determined step we make towards them. If we put off this great work from day to day, its difficulty will increase, and we shall always remember with vain regret yesterday past and nothing done. Time and life, whether we be industrious or idle, keep on their equal and irresistible course, and carry us down their strong current, whether prepared or unprepared towards the inevitable gulf. The slothful man, when he looks back upon the many days that have escaped from him, wishes his necessary business had been done and past along with them: but whilst he wishes, in the true spirit of indolence, he does nothing, his business lies perpetually in his way, a fretting and constant vexation, because, in order to accomplish it, he cannot summon up sufficient resolution to encounter a little trouble, and earn the rewards of diligence: sometimes he delays till diligence itself is not able to redeem lost occasion. What is highly and absolutely necessary should be engaged in at once, as the only way to shorten the trouble attending it: and if it cannot equally be done at any time, the folly of putting it off is increased immeasurably. Let it be deeply
impressed

impressed on our minds, that the great business of preparing for a future life is attended in the highest degree with both these circumstances. It is of the utmost importance, and the possibility of accomplishing it, as to time, is most uncertain. Under this assurance our truest interest is to seize on the present moment for the great purpose, and, reflecting seriously on the uncertain number of our days, apply our hearts to the wisdom that inspires us with fortitude not to fear their end. And for a testimony of our sincerity let us approach the table of our Lord, and as the first fruits of our pious resolutions of thanksgiving for the past mercies of God, and of our hopes in the beginning year, which we know not whether we shall live to finish, offer up before the throne of grace the lively and acceptable sacrifice of a thankful, an humble, and penitent heart, fruitful in newness of life.

THE END.

28 JY 58

In Two Volumes Octavo,

Price Twelve Shillings in Boards,

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, IN ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD,

THE THIRD EDITION OF
SERMONS ON DIFFERENT SUBJECTS,

By the Rev. JOHN HEWLETT,

Of Magdalen College, Cambridge, and Lecturer
of the United Parishes of St. Vedast and St.
Michael Le Queen, Foster-lane.

“There is scarcely a Sermon in this collection from which we might not easily make copious extracts for the satisfaction of our readers, and to the advantage of the author's reputation. We cannot dismiss this article, without congratulating the public on the appearance of a work, which deserves their attention, and displays the genius, learning, and piety, of the author.”

Monthly Review.

“These Sermons are indeed on different subjects; but each is treated with a precision which does honour to Mr. Hewlett's understanding; a clearness which reflects a lustre on his judgment; and a feeling equally creditable to his heart. As Sermons, we have not often seen more finished
com-

compositions ; for though well adapted to common understandings, they must be interesting to the most cultivated minds."

Critical Review.

" The materials of each Sermon appear to have been selected with a constant view to utility, and to have been digested with close attention. The arrangement is accurate, and, what we think an excellence in Sermons, clearly marked. An unity of design, is generally preserved through each discourse, and the uniform characters of the language are chaste simplicity, neatness, and perspicuity."

Analytical Review.

28 JY 58

